EWALD SHAWN

ANARCHY IN ACTION

Anarchy Order

PRINCIPLES, PROPOSITIONS & DISCUSSIONS FOR LAND & FREEDOM

AN INTRODUCTORY WORD TO THE 'ANARCHIVE'

"Anarchy is Order!"

'I must Create a System or be enslav'd by another Man's.
I will not Reason & Compare: my business is to Create'
(William Blake)

During the 19th century, anarchism has develloped as a result of a social current which aims for freedom and happiness. A number of factors since World War I have made this movement, and its ideas, dissapear little by little under the dust of history.
After the classical anarchism – of which the Spanish Revolution was one of the last representatives–a 'new' kind of resistance was founded in the sixties which claimed to be based (at least partly) on this anarchism. However this resistance is often limited to a few (and even then partly misunderstood) slogans such as 'Anarchy is order', 'Property is theft',...

Information about anarchism is often hard to come by, monopolised and intellectual; and therefore visibly disapearing.The 'anarchive' or 'anarchist archive' Anarchy is Order (in short **A.O**) is an attempt to make the '**principles, propositions and discussions**' of this tradition available again for anyone it concerns. We believe that these texts are part of our own heritage. They don't belong to publishers, institutes or specialists.

These texts thus have to be available for all anarchists an other people interested. That is one of the conditions to give anarchism a new impulse, to let the 'new anarchism' outgrow the slogans. This is what makes this project relevant for us: we must find our roots to be able to renew ourselves. We have to learn from the mistakes of our socialist past. History has shown that a large number of the anarchist ideas remain standing, even during the most recent social-economic developments.

'Anarchy Is Order' does not make profits, everything is spread at the price of printing- and papercosts. This of course creates some limitations for these archives.
Everyone is invited to spread along the information we give . This can be done by copying our leaflets, printing from the CD that is available or copying it, e-mailing the texts ,...Become your own anarchive!!!
(Be aware though of copyright restrictions. We also want to make sure that the anarchist or non-commercial printers, publishers and autors are not being harmed. Our priority on the other hand remains to spread the ideas, not the ownership of them.)

The anarchive offers these texts hoping that values like **freedom, solidarity and direct action** get a new meaning and will be lived again; so that the struggle continues against the

'demons of flesh and blood, that sway scepters down here;
and the dirty microbes that send us dark diseases and wish to
squash us like horseflies;
and the will-'o-the-wisp of the saddest ignorance'.
(L-P. Boon)

The rest depends as much on you as it depends on us. Don’t mourn, Organise!

Comments, questions, criticism,cooperation can be send to
A.O@advalvas.be
A complete list and updates are available on this address, new texts are always

WELCOME!!

ANARCHISM IN ACTION: METHODS, TACTICS, SKILLS, AND IDEAS

COMPILED AND EDITED BY SHAWN EWALD

INTRODUCTION

"Now you ask me how you could help this movement or what you could do, and I have no hesitation in saying, much. Every revolution requires revolutionists..." --Isabel Meredith, A Girl Among the Anarchists

"Each one, teach one." --Bob Marley

This book is an attempt at a convenient and straightforward guide to anarchist organizing and action. It is a collection and condensation of the collective wisdom of countless activists and others who took the effort to write down what they learned from experience for the rest of us to share and put into practice. This book is designed to be a tool in the effort to build an Anarchist movement and, ultimately, a free society. However, all radicals, Anarchist or not, who fight for the ideals of autonomy, direct democracy, and freedom for all will find that virtually everything contained in this book is useful to them as well.

Since this book is a practical guide to organizing, direct action, protest, and long term Anarchist projects you will not find much theory in here – there are plenty of other books that will provide you with all the Anarchist theory you could want. But for the benefit of the non-anarchist who may read this book, I will briefly furnish here what I mean by the word Anarchism:

Anarchism is a social, economic, and political movement which largely predates other currently existing radical leftist movements like Marxism, for example. There are many different schools of Anarchist thought, mainly differing on either how an Anarchist society should specifically be organized or specifically how an Anarchist society can be reached. But, regardless of these differences, all legitimate branches of Anarchism share a common commitment to the following four basic principles: individual freedom, social and economic equality, free association, and mutual aid (i.e. cooperation and solidarity). All legitimate Anarchists essentially seek to create a classless, stateless society, free of oppression and exploitation, that is organized and held together by the four principles mentioned above.

For a more complete and straightforward introduction to Anarchism, I suggest that those who are curious should consult the Anarchist FAQ: http://www.anarchistfaq.org/.

The purpose of this book is primarily to provide all the practical tools an anarchist activist may need to do organizing work, to work in any capacity in a protest or direct action, and to develop and nurture projects which will serve as the infrastructure for a future free world.

It is my hope that this book has something for everyone interested in making this world a better place for all and, most importantly, that people will put what they learn from this book into practice to achieve that end. You are welcome to copy and distribute this book, or portions of it, freely. And, furthermore, I encourage people to add to and improve this information as they see fit.

Against Capitalism and the State.
Against All Authority.
For a Free Humanity.
For Anarchism.

FORMS OF DECISION MAKING AND ORGANIZATION

For Anarchists, the means and methods that are used for achieving a goal must be consistent with the goal itself. If we are out to achieve the goal of a free society we cannot do so by authoritarian, top-down means. Anarchists reason that if our collective goal is a free society, then we must organize and make decisions in the same manner that we would if we were actually living in a free society right now -- you won't know how to live free unless you learn to live free now.

This section is devoted to showing the common forms of decision making and and the common units of organization that Anarchists employ and which most closely reflect Anarchist ideals. The information is presented in a way that will be useful for both making decisions for protests and direct actions and also for making decisions in the context of long term projects and social arrangements.

DIRECT DEMOCRACY

What is Direct Democracy?

Direct democracy is different from parliamentary democracy in a number of important ways:

1. Direct democracy is about 'originating' ideas as much as it is about 'approving' them. In parliamentary democracy, people are never asked for their own ideas - they are only asked to 'approve' or 'disapprove' of ideas already prepared for them. Direct democracy is radically different in that way. Direct democracy is based on the realistic notion that

'people know best how to look after their own situation'. We don't need specialists to tell us how to run our places of work or our communities. Anarchists argue that we are quite capable of doing this ourselves. All we need are the resources and the right to do this. Direct democracy is the method.

2. Direct democracy is based on delegation not representation. The crucial difference between delegation and representation is that delegates are only elected to implement specific decisions. Delegates do not have the right to change a decision previously made by an assembly of people. Delegates (unlike representatives) can be immediately recalled and dismissed from their mandate if they don't carry out the specific function allotted to them.

3. Direct democracy is as much about the workplace as it is about the community. In parliamentary democracy, the workplace is 'immune' to democracy (save what rights workers have won through their unions). In direct democracy, the operation of a factory or a plant or an office will be via a general assembly of all workers. This body will decide on conditions of work, will elect re-callable managers, and will organize how work is done. It will also elect people (as delegates) who will coordinate with the other places of work and with the broader community. Regional organization will be managed through a federation of workplaces using a delegate structure.

[From Chapter 9 of "Parliament or democracy?", Workers Solidarity Movement Pamphlet http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/once/pd_chap9.html]

Literal direct democracy (as opposed to consensus, which is sometimes also referred to as direct democracy) is a bottom up method of decision making that uses voting as the means to arrive at decisions. Direct democracy on a small scale can be as simple as a group of people voting by a raise of hands or the marking of ballots to arrive at a decision. Large scale decision making by direct democracy is usually in the form of "councils" of elected delegates whose role is to represent the will of their group at the council. These delegates are recallable and they can usually be recalled for any reason that the group the delegate represents thinks is sufficient grounds for recalling them.

The voting results in direct democracy decisions which determine whether a vote "wins" or "looses" is typically majority vote wins (especially when used on a small scale). But other methods, like forms of proportional representation or using voting to get the majority opinion and then using consensus to incorporate disagreements into the final decision, can be used to modify the voting process. In direct democracy, anyone can call a vote on an issue and anyone can technically call an assembly, however, a group or council can draft and approve guidelines for calling votes and calling assemblies.

The following article describes how the Zapatistas have utilized direct democracy:

From "The Zapatistas, Anarchism and 'Direct democracy'"
Published in Anarcho-Syndicalist Review, #27 Winter 1999

What the Zapatista movement has been about since 1994 is the construction of a system of direct democracy. They form an organizational and decision making network involving hundreds of thousands of
people. There are 32 rebel municipalities, each one with 50 to over 100 communities. More then 500,000

people live as part of this decision making network. There are five language groups - these along with high mountains, jungle and bad roads make any form of libertarian organization difficult. Yet this is exactly what the Zapatistas appear to have constructed.

VILLAGE ASSEMBLIES

The areas the Zapatistas openly organize in are rural and extremely poor. Small communities of a dozen to over 100 families are typical, forced to live off the land without the benefit of modern agricultural machinery. Some of the men will have worked outside the village in local towns or even as far as the USA but in the villages themselves the only political presence tends to come from the Catholic church's local variety of 'liberation theology' and the EZLN itself.

Diez de Abril is a new community founded on land seized in 1995. Those who moved onto the land had worked it before the rebellion. They met in assembly on the land before the take over, decided how to divide up the land and decided to call the new community 'Diez de Abril' after the day (10th April 1919) when Zapata was assassinated.

The routine weekly assembly happens after or even as part of mass on Sunday. It is open to all to attend and all over 12 have speaking and voting rights although votes are very rare. This meeting can go on for hours and typically resolves practical questions concerning work in the community or expenditure of community funds. One long running debate was whether to buy a tractor or a truck. There may be other assemblies if needed during the week.

The assembly elects delegates called 'responsibles' to coordinate work in particular areas. These delegates serve a limited term (one to two years) and are subject to recall within this time if it's felt they are not 'leading by obeying' (i.e. the Zapatista slogan for following the mandate given to them).

There are also collectives that carry out particular tasks within the community. They are set up by and answerable to the assembly but are otherwise autonomous. Collectives in Diez include ones for coffee, cattle honey, horticulture, bread, sewing and chicken. Some of the production of each collective goes to its members; the surplus goes into a central community fund controlled by the assembly.

CCRI

The 'Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee' (CCRI) is the body that actually commands the army. This body (or indeed bodies as there are also regional CCRIs) is composed of delegates from the communities. It is not in itself a military structure.

Regionally it is capable of making decisions that affect individual communities. For instance when one community in the region of Morelia wanted to occupy land shortly after the rebellion "the local Clandestine Revolutionary Indigenous Committee, (CCRI) ordered locals to wait, expecting a region-wide land settlement after the 1994 dialogue".

This in itself is not necessarily a problem if the CCRI is a genuine delegate body. In many revolutionary situations it makes sense to hold back militant sections in case premature action results in the suppression of the movement. In this case I'd probably have disagreed with the decision but the question is how it was made and who made it. The people of the region or some unaccountable body acting in their name?

A month after the rising the Mexican liberal paper 'La Jornada' which extensively covers the Zapatistas interviewed some members of the CCRI. One called Isacc explained the accountability of the CCRI ;

"If the people say that a companero who is a member of the CCRI is not doing anything, that we are not respecting the people or are not doing what the people say, then the people say that they want to remove us ...

In that way, if some member of the CCRI does not do their work, if they do not respect the people, well compa, it is not your place to be there. Then, well, excuse us but we will have to put another in your place".

THE CONSULTA

Even still the CCRI does not have the power to make major decisions, such as peace or war. These must instead be made through a 'consulta' - crudely a referendum but one where intense discussions in each community is as central to the process as the vote itself. These take months and have been a great source of annoyance to the Mexican government, which always wants an answer to its proposals on the spot or within days.

One EZLN communiqué explained the consulta process as follows;

"The consultations took place in every community and ejido where there are members of the EZLN.
The study, analysis, and discussion of the peace accords took place in democratic assemblies. The voting was direct, free, and democratic.

After the voting, official reports of the results of the assemblies were prepared. These reports specify: the date and place of the assembly, the number of people who attended (men, women and children older than 12 years old), opinions and principal points discussed, and the number of people who voted."

This broadly ties into what observers who have seen consultas take place tell me. It was such a consulta that decided that the 1994 rising should go ahead, a year before Marcos and the army command considered they were ready. Consultas since have decided to enter into talks with the government, to accept the San Andres agreement and later to break off talks until the government implemented what had already been agreed.

THE COUNCILS

These regional structures are designed to make the big decisions, the questions of war or peace etc. However, obviously state wide meetings are far too unwieldy to settle smaller questions. The rebellion has also meant Zapatista communities refusing all contact with the Mexican state - right down to refusing to register births and deaths.

The practical problem thrown up by the need for inter community coordination saw the formation of regional councils. These are known as autonomous municipalities. 100 communities for instance make up the autonomous municipality named after the Mexican anarchist Ricardo Flores Magon. Tierra y Libertad, on the border with Guatemala contains a total of 120 communities.

"Within the newly created municipal structures, the communities name their authorities, community teachers, local health promoters, indigenous parliaments, and elaborate their own laws based on social, economic, political and gender equality among the inhabitants of diverse ethnic communities."

A Mexican NGO in detailing the government's attempts to smash these communities explains how they function;

"The communities of an indigenous zone or area are the ones who decide, at an assembly of all their members, whether or not they will belong to the autonomous municipality It is the communities who elect their representatives for the Autonomous Municipal Council, which is the authority for the municipality. Each representative is chosen for one area of administration within the autonomous municipality, and they may be removed if they do not fully comply with the communities' mandates ... Those who hold a position on the Municipal Council do not receive a salary for it, although their expenses should be paid by the same communities who request their presence, through cooperation among the members. In some cases, members of the Council are supported in their farm work, so they can dedicate themselves to their [Council] work, and not have to go the fields."

These structures are obviously ones compatible with anarchism or indeed revolutionary syndicalism. They key checks of mandate and recall are there. The fact that these structures are not consciously anarchist but arise from a blend of indigenous practice, Marxism and Liberation Theology should not prevent us standing in solidarity with them.

More importantly, whatever their origins they offer a current model of some of what we talk about in practice. Chiapas is isolated and extremely poor, the fact that libertarian structures can flourish in such harsh conditions in the midst of a Low Intensity war can only demonstrate how valid they are.

* * *

DIRECT DEMOCRACY PROS AND CONS:

Pros: Direct democracy is often a fast and efficient way for groups to make decisions. Direct democracy is viewed as being a results-oriented method of decision making, as opposed to a process-oriented method. Finally, direct democracy is considered a very flexible method of decision making that is applicable to a wide variety of situations.

Cons: Some people view some forms of direct democracy as being too efficient and results oriented and not process oriented enough. Some people consider the use of "majority rules" voting, as in some forms of direct democracy, to be undermining of egalitarianism in a group decision making process.

CONSENSUS

What is Consensus?

NOTE: The following article is about formal consensus decision making, which is not an ideal method for anarchists and some of the steps in the process described below can be removed, modified, or merged as a group sees fit. Additional tips for anarchist consensus decision making can be found at the end of this essay.

From "On decisionmaking"
http://www.consensus.net/ocac2.html

Consensus ... is a process which requires an environment in which all contributions are valued and participation is encouraged. There are, however, few organizations which use a model of consensus which is specific, consistent, and efficient. Often, the consensus process is informal, vague, and very inconsistent. This happens when the consensus process is not based upon a solid foundation and the structure is unknown or nonexistent. To develop a more formal type of consensus process, any organization must define the commonly held principles which form the foundation of the group's work and intentionally choose the type of structure within which the process is built.

THE STRUCTURE OF FORMAL CONSENSUS

This structure creates a separation between the identification and the resolution of concerns. Perhaps, if everybody in the group has no trouble saying what they think, they won't need this structure. This predictable structure provides opportunities to those who don't feel empowered to participate.

Formal Consensus is presented in levels or cycles. In the first level, the idea is to allow everyone to express their perspective, including concerns,but group time is not spent on resolving problems. In the second level the group focuses its attention on identifying concerns, still not resolving them. This requires discipline. Reactive comments, even funny ones, and resolutions, even good ones, can suppress the creative ideas of others. Not until the third level does the structure allow for exploring resolutions.

Each level has a different scope and focus. At the first level, the scope is broad, allowing the discussion to consider the philosophical and political implications as well as the general merits and drawbacks and other relevant information. The only focus is on the proposal as a whole. Some decisions can be reached after discussion at the first level. At the second level, the scope of the discussion is limited to the concerns. They are identified and publicly listed, which enables everyone to get an overall picture of the concerns. The focus of attention is on identifying the body of concerns and grouping similar ones. At the third level, the scope is very narrow. The focus of discussion is limited to a single unresolved concern until it is resolved.

The Flow of the Formal Consensus Process

In an ideal situation, every proposal would be submitted in writing and briefly introduced the first time it appears on the agenda. At the next meeting, after everyone has had enough time to read it and carefully consider any concerns, the discussion would begin in earnest. Often, it would not be until the third meeting that a decision is made. Of course, this depends upon how many proposals are on the table and the urgency of the decision.

Clarify the Process

The facilitator introduces the person presenting the proposal and gives a short update on any previous action on it. It is very important for the facilitator to explain the process which brought this proposal to the meeting,and to describe the process that will be followed to move the group through the proposal to consensus. It is the facilitator's job to make sure that every participant clearly understands the structure and the discussion techniques being employed while the meeting is in progress.

Present Proposal or Issue

When possible and appropriate, proposals ought to be prepared in writing and distributed well in advance of the meeting in which a decision is required. This encourages prior discussion and consideration, helps the presenter anticipate concerns, minimizes surprises, and involves everyone in creating the proposal. (If the necessary groundwork has not been done, the wisest choice might be to send the proposal to committee. Proposal writing is difficult to accomplish in a large group. The committee would develop the proposal for consideration at a later time.) The presenter reads the written proposal aloud, provides background information, and states clearly its benefits and reasons for adoption, including addressing any existing concerns.

Questions Which Clarify the Presentation

Questions are strictly limited by the facilitator to those which seek greater comprehension of the proposal as presented. Everyone deserves the opportunity to fully understand what is being asked of the group before discussion begins. This is not a time for comments or concerns. If there are only a few questions, they can be answered one at a time by the person presenting the proposal. If there are many, a useful technique is hearing all the questions first, then answering them together. After answering all clarifying questions, the group begins discussion.

Level One: Broad Open Discussion
General Discussion

Discussion at this level ought to be the broadest in scope. Try to encourage comments which take the whole proposal into account; i.e., why it is a good idea, or general problems which need to be addressed. Discussion at this level often has a philosophical or principled tone, purposely addressing how this proposal might affect the group in the long run or what kind of precedent it might create, etc. It helps every proposal to be discussed in this way, before the group engages in resolving particular concerns. Do not allow one concern to become the focus of the discussion. When particular concerns are raised, make note of them but encourage the discussion to move back to the proposal as a whole. Encourage the creative interplay of comments and ideas. Allow for the addition of any relevant factual information. For those who might at first feel opposed to the proposal, this discussion is consideration of why it might be good for the group in the broadest sense. Their initial concerns might, in fact, be of general concern to the whole group. And, for those who initially support the proposal, this is a time to think about the proposal broadly and some of the general problems. If there seems to be general approval of the proposal, the facilitator,or someone recognized to speak, can request a call for consensus.

Call for Consensus

The facilitator asks, "Are there any unresolved concerns?" or "Are there any concerns remaining?" After a period of silence, if no additional concerns are raised, the facilitator declares that consensus is reached and the proposal is read for the record. The length of silence ought to be directly related to the degree of difficulty in reaching consensus; an easy decision requires a short silence, a difficult decision requires a longer silence. This encourages everyone to be at peace in accepting the consensus before moving on to other business. At this point, the facilitator [calls for volunteers] or sends the decision to a committee for implementation. It is important to note that the question is not "Is there consensus?"or "Does everyone agree?". These questions do not encourage an environment in which all concerns can be expressed. If some people have a concern, but are shy or intimidated by a strong showing of support for a proposal,the question "Are there any unresolved concerns?" speaks directly to them and provides an opportunity for them to speak. Any concerns for which someone stands aside are listed with the proposal and become a part of it.

Level Two: Identify Concerns

List All Concerns

At the beginning of the next level, a discussion technique called brainstorming is used so that concerns can be identified and written down publicly by the scribe and for the record by the note taker. Be sure the scribe is as accurate as possible by checking with the person who voiced the concern before moving on. This is not a time to attempt to resolve concerns or determine their validity. That would stifle free expression of concerns. At this point, only concerns are to be expressed, reasonable or unreasonable, well thought out or vague feelings. The facilitator wants to interrupt any comments which attempt to defend the proposal, resolve the concerns, judge the value of the concerns, or in any way deny or dismiss another's feelings of doubt or concern. Sometimes simply allowing a concern to be expressed and written down helps resolve it. After all concerns have been listed, allow the group a moment to reflect on them as a whole.

Group Related Concerns

At this point, the focus is on identifying patterns and relationships between concerns. This short exercise must not be allowed to focus upon or resolve any particular concern.

Level Three: Resolve Concerns

Resolve Groups of Related Concerns

Often, related concerns can be resolved as a group.

Call for Consensus

If most of the concerns seem to have been resolved, call for consensus in the manner described earlier. If some concerns have not been resolved at this time, then a more focused discussion is needed.

Restate Remaining Concerns (One at a Time)

Return to the list. The facilitator checks each one with the group and removes ones which have been resolved or are, for any reason, no longer of concern. Each remaining concern is restated clearly and concisely and addressed one at a time. Sometimes new concerns are raised which need to be added to the list. However, every individual is responsible for honestly expressing concerns as they think of them. It is not appropriate to holdback a concern and spring it upon the group late in the process. This undermines trust and limits the group's ability to adequately discuss the concern in its relation to other concerns.

Questions Which Clarify the Concern

The facilitator asks for any questions or comments which would further clarify the concern so everyone clearly understands it before discussion starts.

Discussion Limited to Resolving One Concern

Use as many creative group discussion techniques as needed to facilitate a resolution for each concern. Keep the discussion focused upon the particular concern until every suggestion has been offered. If no new ideas are coming forward and the concern cannot be resolved, or if the time allotted for this item has been entirely used, move to one of the closing options described below.

Call for Consensus

Repeat this process until all concerns have been resolved. At this point,the group should be at consensus, but it would be appropriate to call for consensus anyway just to be sure no concern has been overlooked.

Closing Options

Send to Committee

If a decision on the proposal can wait until the whole group meets again, then send the proposal to a committee which can clarify the concerns and bring new, creative resolutions for consideration by the group. [You should] include on the committee representatives of all the major concerns, as well as those most supportive of the proposal so they can work out solutions in a less formal setting. Sometimes, if the decision is needed before the next meeting, a smaller group can be empowered to make the decision for the larger group, but again, this committee should include all points of view. Choose this option only if it is absolutely necessary and the whole group consents.

Stand Aside (Decision Adopted with Unresolved Concerns Listed)

When a concern has been fully discussed and cannot be resolved, it is appropriate for the facilitator to ask those persons with this concern if they are willing to stand aside; that is, acknowledge that the concern still exists,but allow the proposal to be adopted. It is very important for the whole group to understand that this unresolved concern is then written down with the proposal in the record and, in essence, becomes a part of the decision. This concern can be raised again and deserves more discussion time as it has not yet been resolved. In contrast, a concern which has been resolved in past discussion does not deserve additional discussion, unless something new has developed. Filibustering is not appropriate in Formal Consensus.

Declare Block

After having spent the allotted agenda time moving through the three levels of discussion trying to achieve consensus and concerns remain which are unresolved, the facilitator is obligated to declare that consensus cannot be reached at this meeting, that the proposal is blocked, and move on to the next agenda item. The Rules of Formal Consensus The guidelines and techniques in this book are flexible and meant to be modified. Some of the guidelines, however, seem almost always to be true. These are the Rules of Formal Consensus:

1. Once a decision has been adopted by consensus,it cannot be changed without reaching a new consensus. If a new consensus cannot be reached, the old decision stands. 2. In general, only one person has permission to speak at any moment. The person with permission to speak is determined by the group discussion technique in use and/or the facilitator.(The role of Peacekeeper is exempt from this rule.) 3. All structural decisions (i.e., which roles to use, who fills each role, and which facilitation technique and/or group discussion technique to use) are adopted by consensus without debate. Any objection automatically causes a new selection to be made. If a role cannot be filled without objection, the group proceeds without that role being filled. If much time is spent trying to fill roles or find acceptable techniques, then the group needs a discussion about the unity of purpose of this group and why it is having this problem, a discussion which must be put on the agenda for the next meeting, if not held immediately. 4. All content decisions (i.e., the agenda contract, committee reports, proposals, etc.) are adopted by consensus after discussion. Every content decision must be openly discussed before it can be tested for consensus. 5. A concern must be based upon the principles of the group to justify a block to consensus. 6. Every meeting which uses Formal Consensus must have an evaluation.

* * *

Additional Tips for Consensus Decision Making

Choosing facilitators: In a consensus process, the facilitator is a very powerful person. It is very important that the facilitator is not preselected by someone other than the group making decisions. The facilitator should come from the group itself and the role of facilitator should be rotated from meeting to meeting.

The simplest way for a facilitator to be chosen is to ask members of the group to come forward and volunteer to be the facilitator. From that group of volunteers, the facilitator for that meeting can be chosen either by group vote or at random. Selecting a facilitator at random can be done by drawing lots, by rolling a die and having each of the volunteers pick a number off the die, etc.

Creating agendas: If a group is to function truly democratically, the group must not only make decisions democratically, but they must select the agenda for the meeting and the issues that are to be decided upon as well. A small cadre of organizers creating an agenda beforehand and then telling people to "consent" to it is not democratic regardless of the process used to arrive at "consent".

Consensus Pros and Cons:

Pros: Consensus is viewed by many to be a very egalitarian form of decision making where process is paramount and the concerns of all people affected by a decision are considered.

Cons: Some view consensus as a very time consuming and complex process and some believe that consensus makes it difficult for people who have limited time available (like working people) to fully participate in groups that use consensus decision making. Some also view the usefulness of consensus to be limited because it is believed that people must be generally prepared to agree to begin with before using consensus and, thus, they view consensus as being not useful for deciding contentious or controversial issues.

PLEASE NOTE: It is perfectly reasonable to combine parts of consensus decision making and direct democracy if this is preferable to your group or organization. It is always good to experiment with different methods to arrive at the decision making method that works best for your group or organization.

GENERAL TIPS FOR MEETINGS AND FACILITATION

Make sure everyone knows the time and place.

Have a collectively developed agenda.

Try to start on time.

Make sure someone is taking notes.

Facilitators should do their best to get all points of view.

Facilitators should not use their position to impose their personal ideas and opinions on the group.

Facilitators should be attentive to people who are speaking -- look at them, lean forward, smile, nod. Make eye contact with people who may need encouragement to speak.

Try to end on time. Nothing makes people dread and avoid meetings more than knowing they're likely to go on and on and consume far more of their time than they want to give.

Make sure the minutes are written up and, if necessary, posted or distributed.

Start getting ready for the next meeting!

AFFINITY GROUPS

[Excerpted from Direct Democracy Now! http://www.directdemocracynow.org/ags.html]

WHAT IS AN AFFINITY GROUP?

An affinity group is a small group of 5 to 20 people who work together autonomously on direct actions or other projects. You can form an affinity group with your friends, people from your community, workplace, or organization.

Affinity groups challenge top-down decision-making and organizing, and empower those involved to take creative direct action. Affinity groups allow people to "be" the action they want to see by giving complete freedom and decision-making power to the affinity group. Affinity groups by nature are decentralized and non-hierarchical, two important principles of anarchist organizing and action. The affinity group model was first used by anarchists in Spain in the late 19th and early 20th century, and was re-introduced to radical direct action by anti-nuclear activists during the 1970s, who used decentralized non-violent direct action to blockade roads, occupy spaces and disrupt "business as usual" for the nuclear and war makers of the US. Affinity groups have a long and interesting past, owing much to the anarchists and workers of Spain and the anarchists and radicals today who use affinity groups, non-hierarchical structures, and consensus decision making in direct action and organizing.

AFFINITY GROUP ROLES [IN A PROTEST]

There are many roles that one could possibly fill. These roles include:

Medical - An affinity group may want to have someone who is a trained street medic who can deal with any medical or health issues during the action.

Legal observer - If there are not already legal observers for an action, it may be important to have people not involved in the action taking notes on police conduct and possible violations of activists rights.

Media - If you are doing an action which plans to draw media, a person in the affinity group could be empowered to talk to the media and act as a spokesperson.

Action Elf/Vibes-watcher - This is someone who would help out with the general wellness of the group: water, massages, and encouragement through starting a song or cheer. This is not a role is necessary, but may be particularly helpful in day long actions where people might get tired or irritable as the day wears on.

Traffic - If it is a moving affinity group, it may be necessary to have people who are empowered to stop cars at intersections and in general watch out for the safety of people on the streets from cars and other vehicles.

Arrest-able members - This depends on what kind of direct action you are doing. Some actions may require a certain number of people willing to get arrested, or some parts of an action may need a minimum number of arrest-ables. Either way, it is important to know who is doing the action and plans on getting arrested.

Jail Support - Again, this is only if you have an affinity group who has people getting arrested. This person has all the arrestees contact information and will go to the jail, talk to and work with lawyers, keep track of who got arrested etc.

[Affinity groups are not just useful within a protest or direct action setting, this form of organization can be used for a wide variety of purposes as the history of affinity groups below illustrates.]

HISTORY OF AFFINITY GROUPS

The idea of affinity groups comes out of the anarchist and workers movement that was created in the late 19th century and fought fascism in Spain during the Spanish Civil War. The Spanish Anarchist movement provides an exhilarating example of a movement, and the actual possibility of a society based on decentralized organization, direct democracy and the principles behind them.

Small circles of good friends, called "tertulias" would meet at cafes to discuss ideas and plan actions. In 1888, a period of intense class conflict in Europe and of local insurrection and struggle in Spain, the Anarchist Organization of the Spanish Region made this traditional form (tertulias) the basis of its organization.

Decades later, the Iberian Anarchist Federation, which contained 50,000 activists, organized into affinity groups and confederated into local, regional, and national councils. Wherever several FAI affinity groups existed, they formed a local federation. Local federations were coordinated by committees were made up of one mandated delegate from each affinity group. Mandated delegates were sent from local federations to regional committees and finally to the Peninsular Committee. Affinity groups remained autonomous as they carried out education, organized and supported local struggles. The intimacy of the groups made police infiltration difficult.

The idea of large-scale affinity group based organization was planted in the United States on April 30, 1977 when 2,500 people, organized into affinity groups, occupied the Seabrook, New Hampshire nuclear power plant. The growing anti-nuclear power and disarmament movements adopted this mode, and used it in many successful actions throughout the late 1970s and 1980s. Since then, it has been used by the Central America solidarity movement, lesbian/gay liberation movement, Earth First and earth liberation movement, and many others.

Most recently, affinity groups have been used in the mass actions in Seattle for the WTO and Washington DC for the IMF and World Bank, as well as Philadelphia and Los Angles around the Republican and Democratic National Conventions.

WHAT IS A CLUSTER AND A SPOKESCOUNCIL?

A cluster is a grouping of affinity groups that come together to work on a certain task or part of a larger action. Thus, a cluster might be responsible for blockading an area, organizing one day of a multi-day action, or putting together and performing a mass street theater performance. Clusters could be organized around where affinity groups are from (example: Texas cluster), an issue or identity (examples: student cluster or anti-sweatshop cluster), or action interest (examples: street theater or [black bloc]).

A spokescouncil is the larger organizing structure used in the affinity group model to coordinate a mass action. Each affinity group (or cluster) empowers a spoke (representative) to go to a spokescouncil meeting to decide on important issues for the action. For instance, affinity groups need to decide on a legal/jail strategy, possible tactical issues, meeting places, and many other logistics. A spokescouncil does not take away an individual affinity group's autonomy within an action; affinity groups make there own decisions about what they want to do on the streets.

HOW TO START AN AFFINITY GROUP

An affinity group could be a relationship among people that lasts for years among a group of friends and activists, or it could be a week long relationship based around a single action. Either way, it is important to join an affinity group that is best suited to you and your interests.

If you are forming an affinity group in your city or town, find friends or fellow activists who have similar issue interests, and thus would want to go to similar actions. Also, look for people who would be willing to use similar tactics - if you want to do relatively high risk lockdowns, someone who does not want to be in that situation may not want to be in the affinity group. That person could do media or medic work, but it may not be best if they are completely uncomfortable around certain tactics of direct action.

If you are looking to join an affinity group at a mass action, first find out what affinity groups open to new members and which ones are closed. For many people, affinity groups are based on trusting relationships based around years of friendship and work, thus they might not want people they don't know in their affinity group. Once you find which affinity groups are open, look for ones that have an issue interest or action tactic that you are drawn to.

WHAT CAN AN AFFINITY GROUP DO?

Anything!!! They can be used for mass or smaller scale actions. Affinity groups can be used to drop a banner, blockade a road, provide back-up for other affinity groups, do street theater, block traffic riding bikes, organize a tree sit, [confront the police, strategic property destruction], change the message on a massive billboard, play music in a radical marching band or sing in a revolutionary choir, etc. There can even be affinity groups who take on certain tasks in an action. For instance, there could be a roving affinity group made up of street medics, or an affinity group who brings food and water to people on the streets.

What makes affinity groups so effective for actions is that they can remain creative and independent and plan out their own action without an organization or person dictating to them what can and can't be done. Thus, there are an endless amount of possibilities for what affinity groups can do. Be creative and remember: direct action gets the goods!

COLLECTIVES

What is a Collective?

A collective is a permanent organizational grouping that exists to accomplish a range of tasks or achieve a goal or maintain a permanent project. Collective members usually share the same political views, in fact, they are often united as a collective by their political views specifically. Most collectives are also local in focus since most collective projects are based in local communities, most collective projects are local in scope, and the collectives themselves are made up of people who live relatively close to each other.

Collectives, on a small scale, are often not very different from affinity groups, however, small groups that refer to themselves as collectives usually work on long term projects like publishing a magazine, or running an infoshop, or operating a business. Affinity groups can theoretically do anything, but typically affinity groups often focus on varying short term goals and tasks. A collective, on the other hand, focuses on long term goals and permanent projects.

For example, an affinity group may decide to post political flyers all over a city either as part of a larger action or as an individual action that the affinity group takes upon itself. Whereas a collective that ran an infoshop would post flyers all over a city to promote an event happening at the infoshop. The action performed by the affinity group would be an end in itself, but the action performed by an infoshop collective would just be one task among a variety of tasks that are required to maintain a permanent project like an infoshop.

Also, unlike an affinity group, a collective technically has no size limitations. A collective can number anywhere from 3 to 200. However, when a collective reaches a certain size, it may be wise to either break up a collective into one or more smaller collectives or divide the collective internally into permanent affinity groups. Decision making in a collective can range from direct democracy, to consensus, to combinations of both.

TIPS ON FORMING AND MAINTAINING A COLLECTIVE

Try to organize your collective with an effort towards bringing in people that incorporate as many key skills relevant to accomplishing your goals as possible.

Take action with a specific focus, within the context of your broader concerns. A "scattershot" approach to your collective's activity will likely end in frustration.

Identify and approach all possible allies to your collective and its goals.

Take yourself, your collective, and your issues seriously. If you lack confidence in your project or your cause it will soon show.

Continuity, persistence, and focus are prime ingredients for success.

The easy part is getting started. The hard part is keeping things going. The single most important way to sustain a collective is to be active. If you don't develop regular projects and actions as a group that people can involve themselves in, they will sense a purposelessness to the group and drop out.

To avoid the dilution or subversion of your collective's politics or goals (intentional or not), the group should be founded on an explicit basis. Coalitions are more susceptible to manipulation than groups with clearly identified politics and goals.

[Excerpted from the War Resisters League pamphlet "Organizing a Local Group" by Ed Hedemann with modifications by the editor.]

Getting Started

If possible, contact a member of an existing collective that you know of and ask advice on how to go about forming a collective in your area.

Contact as many people in your area that you think might be interested. If they are interested, tell them to tell anyone they may know that might be interested. Call together a meeting of everyone involved in a public place (such as a library or bowling alley) and discuss setting a clear agenda of what should be and what could be done. Encourage every member to speak up and voice disagreements so that each member feels comfortable being honest.

If there is an anarchist book shop or community center in your area, post leaflets up that tell about
the group and what you aim to accomplish. If there are no anarchist book shops or community centers, try and find somewhere else where you think the group might be welcomed.

Set some short-term goals and execute them. This could be something like distributing 500
leaflets, attending a demonstration, organizing a small demonstration of your own, getting anarchist classics into your local library, or participating in and learning from existing community projects. The only limit to this is your imagination.

Once you have established the collective, you can work on projects to maintain interest in the collective. These are goals that require extensive planning and resourcefulness and are definitely worth the effort if they go as planned. A good example is broadcasting a public-access cable show, or a weekly program on community radio -- but they require lots of scripting and someone that will stay calm on the air as well as appear friendly. Obviously, what can be done is, again, limited only by your imagination. If you choose to do something though, make lots of plans for every detail so that if anything fails you've got at least a few back up plans. Basically, use some common sense and try and decide what will work best for your community.

What is very important, though, is that the group takes action. Action defines the existence of the collective, people want a group that gets results. Everyone promises results, but the ones that deliver will be the ones that have the most support. What this also means is that you have to know what problems people face. Talking with people openly is a good way to understand these problems, as well as finding good solutions and new tactics.

[Excerpted from "Information on Starting a Heatwave Collective"
http://flag.blackened.net/heatwave/collective.html with modifications by the editor.]

Federations and Networks

What is a Federation?

Federations are essentially unions of autonomous organizations and/or affinity groups. An anarchist federation can be viewed as the regional, or national, or international decision making body of the union (depending on the federation's self-imposed geographical limitations) and the collectives or affinity groups that belong to the federation can be viewed as autonomous union locals. Federations are formal organizations with constitutions, bylaws, and specific membership guidelines. There are three general types of federations that have been formed in recent memory, I will refer to them as "Specialist", "General Revolutionary", and "Synthesist" Federations. This terminology is in no way standard, but it is useful for purposes of description.

"Specialist Federations": Federations, like affinity groups and collectives, can exist to serve a specific role or achieve a specific goal. An example of a "specialist" federation is the Anarchist Black Cross Federation (ABCF http://www.abcf.net/), which exists to do support work for political prisoners.

"General Revolutionary Federations": Federations can also be very broad in scope and focus on organizing around a particular political viewpoint, as well as doing organizing work and activism that embodies and advances that political view. An example of a "general revolutionary" federation is the North Eastern Federation of Anarchist-Communists (NEFAC http://www.nefac.org), which is a federation with a broad scope that does a variety of organizing and activism consistent with the principles of Anarchist-Communism.

"Synthesist Federations": An Anarchist federation that is "synthesist" is one that attempts to be inclusive of all Anarchist tendencies and bring Anarchists of all the varying tendencies into a single organization – a "synthesist federation" can be considered a subcategory of "general revolutionary" federations. The closest example of a contemporary "synthesist" federation is the defunct Love and Rage Federation.

Federation Structure

How a federation is organized and how it makes decisions is entirely up to the members of the federation. But, in terms of decision making, it can be safely said that all currently viable Anarchist federations use recallable delegates that are sent by their collectives and/or affinity groups to federation assemblies to make decisions that pertain to the federation as a whole. In terms of the what the specific internal structure of a federation is or whether consensus or direct democracy is used by the federation to make decisions, there are no hard and fast rules other than the structure and decision making method used by the federation must be consistent with the fundamental principles of Anarchism.

What is a Network?

A useful way to define anarchist networks is to compare it to an anarchist federation. Networks are far less formal than a federation (although, some networks are formal enough in structure to blur the line between network and federation), and they usually only require an agreement to a set of principles or the sharing of a general political viewpoint as a qualification for membership. Also, unlike federations which emphasize collective action and organization, networks emphasize autonomy over formal organization. This does not mean to imply that anarchist networks are not organized or that they are against organization. It simply means that their organizational focus is on allowing individual member groups to engage in actions that fit within the context of the network and utilize the network itself primarily for solidarity and support of the individual member groups as needed. Generally speaking, there are two main types of networks: formal networks and informal networks.

Formal Networks: What typically makes a network formal is that it has a "global" decision making structure – meaning that, like a federation, there is an overarching body of delegates that make decisions pertaining to the network as a whole – in most other aspects formal networks are mostly the same as informal networks. A good example of a formal network is the Direct Action Network (DAN http://www.directactionnetwork.org/).

Informal Networks:

In the last 20 years, the informal network structure has been, hands down, the most effective method of anarchist organization -- as the wide variety of highly successful informal network organizations prove. The use of informal networks in the Anarchist movement has been so widespread and successful that, in sheer numbers of groups and members, this form of organization currently makes up the bulk of Anarchist organizations around the world. Examples of informal Anarchist networks are: Food Not

Bombs, Earth First!, Reclaim The Streets, Anti-Racist Action, Homes Not Jails, etc.

Communication: Getting the Word Out

As important as being organized, getting your information out, spreading information about events and important issues, communicating your ideas to an audience, reporting news about actions, demonstrations, and organizing going on in the movement that are not reported in the capitalist media, are among the core responsibilities of an any activist.

This section covers everything from wheat pasting and tabling, to public speaking, to doing DIY independent media, to representing your group, or your politics, or your issues to the mainstream media. A good activist would do well to learn as many of these skills as they can.

Postering, Tabling, and Propaganda Distribution

Wheat Pasting Made Fun and Simple By Lauren Liberty
http://www.misterridiculous.com/diy/wheatpasting/

Supplies needed:

Wheat flour
Water
Paint brushes or inexpensive sponge brushes
Fliers and/or posters
Container with lid
Gloves*
Plastic bag*

* Optional

Whether you're pasting artwork, political posters or fliers for a show, wheat paste is a good medium to glue them up with. Unlike wallpaper paste, wheat flour is cheap and easy to get a hold of. If you're going to be doing a lot of pasting, a bucket with a lid, a handle, and a paint roller work well. Otherwise a plastic container with a lid will hold enough.

Pour dry wheat flour into the container about 1/3 of the way full. Slowly mix it with water, stirring as you do so. You want the wheat paste to be thin enough to paint onto walls but thick enough to stick.

To put something up paint the wall with a thick layer of paste and smooth your poster over it. Make sure you glue the edges down. Don't paste over the poster or you won't be able to see it. Wheat paste is not clear. If you're worried that the poster might get damaged in the weather, or if you want to make it harder to take down, spray [or paint] a clear coating of shellac over it. The wheat paste sticks best to surfaces like cement. If you put the poster up well enough the only way anyone is going to be able to take it down is by buffing it off.

If you're worried about being linked to the crime, wear gloves and carry a plastic bag with you. If you see a security guard or a police officer, put all your wheat pasting supplies in the bag. To make it even less suspicious wear some nice light-colored clothing (so that the wheat paste doesn't show up on it) and carry a Gap shopping bag. Play it off.

Remember, it's best to wheat paste with a purpose. It's a great way to make a political (or anti-political) statement or put up your artwork for others to enjoy. Good luck and have fun!

* * *

Tabling

Why Table - Setting up a literature table at events is a lot of work; why should you put so much energy into this? Answers:

A. Tabling makes money
B. Tabling provides outreach for your group
C. Tabling provides activity for members looking for something to do.

All of these benefits are essential for building your group, and making it strong. It is important, especially when you are not involved in a local organizing drive, to generate activity and be seen. And, if your group is not active, and you do not plan any events, your members will drift away.

Where to set up a table - All of the following events and locations are useful and beneficial to some degree. They are listed in decreasing order of likely success (based on observations made by experienced East Bay IWW members):

A. Big political events, demonstrations, and marches;
B. Events of your own;
C. Small events;
D. Specific locations in your community;

It is best to start with no more than one event or tabling effort per month and build up your momentum. The least likely to succeed (in terms of raising money or general outreach) is establishing a table in front of a supermarket or a transportation center. Tabling at big political events, on the other hand, while not especially conducive to organizing, is nevertheless much more conducive to raising money for the group and letting active folks know of your group's existence.

Supplies you will need - In order to successfully table and accommodate your volunteers, you should obtain the following (lightweight, yet durable materials are the best)

A. Portable Tables (if none are available, a tarp laid out on flat ground will work)
B. Folding Chairs
C. Milk Crates (for transport; can double as chairs)
D. Rubber Bands (wind is always a nuisance)
E. A Cash Box and $20 in Small Bills for change (round your prices off to the dollar; it's much easier)
F. Clip Boards (for petitions and sign-up sheets)
G. Literature Racks (not essential, but highly useful, especially if space is limited)
H. Tarps and Rope (in wet climates)

And, a durable hand truck with straps for transport is essential. These can usually be found for very little money (less than $50) second hand. But get one that is durable and will last. Airport luggage carts are flimsy and will fall apart due to wear and tear.

Free Literature - If your table is full of neat stuff for sale, you will be able to distribute a great deal of organizing literature for free, because folks who come to the table, whether to browse, buy, or ask questions, will inevitably accept any free information you provide. So, it is not a bad idea to produce some basic literature explaining what your group is working on and/or has accomplished. Petitions and Pledges of Solidarity are also useful to have. This is yet another benefit of setting up an table.

[From Steve Ongerth, East Bay IWW with modifications by the editor.]

Guidelines for Tabling (free literature and merchandise)

Be sure that the name of your group appears on a sign or banner prominently displayed and visible from a distance. People want to know who you are.

If you are selling merchandise: Have an appropriate amount of change in a cash box or other suitable container. The cash box should also contain pens, pencils, tape, scratch paper, etc. As the day goes on, if you are accumulating a considerable amount of money in the cash box, take out all cash except what you need to make change and put it in a safe place . Do not neglect to do this, so that the risk of theft can be kept to a minimum. Keep careful records of financial transactions while tabling – it might be a good idea to keep a record of donations, memberships, sales, and sales tax, separately.

Make the table display as attractive as possible. A tablecloth perhaps, a variety of colorful books, shirts, eye-catching signs, posters, etc., will draw people over. Hang up shirts if you can instead of just putting them flat on a table.

Put free literature front and center to make it as easy as possible for people to pick up something and take it with them.

As people approach the table, stand up and engage them in friendly conversation.

Always provide a sign-up sheet that offers further contact. Usually that contact would be a promise to receive the next issue of your newsletter or to notify people of an upcoming event you're planning. Forward a copy of these sign-up sheets to the person in your group who keeps track of your group's mailing list. This is more important for small groups for whom adding a few new members would be a big boost than for large groups, which will probably find it too much work and cost for minimal response.

The person in charge of the booth should know prices of all merchandise for sale. Take an up-to-date price list of all merchandise. All items should be marked with the price, whenever possible.

As the day goes on, straighten literature periodically to maintain a neat appearance of the table. For outdoor events, have with you a plastic sheet of some kind for a quick cover if it rains, and a bunch of clean rocks (or rubber bands) you can use to keep pamphlets from blowing away if it's windy. Protect the free literature as carefully from moisture and excessive dust as you would the merchandise for sale.

If someone asks you a question about the material you are tabling that you don't know the answer to, try to get their name and phone number. Offer to find out the answer and call them back -- then do it. This is much preferable to giving incorrect information, or none.

For groups that have merchandise brochures and can fulfill mail orders: If someone shows an interest in an item you can't supply right then, give them a merchandise brochure and invite them to place an order for it.

[Excerpted from "Guidelines for Tabling" http://www.ivu.org/vuna/guide/guidelinest.html with modifications by the editor.]

Other Ways to Distribute Free Literature

Coffeehouses: There are often vegetarian or eclectic cafés, coffeehouses or stores which are not corporate and cater to casual patrons who aren't rich people or trendy. Basically, they are places YOU would feel comfortable hanging out at with your friends. Some may be meeting places for activists. These are a good bet for leaving literature but, you should clear it with the people who run the place before leaving any literature. If they won't go for it, don't try to convince them. Just find another place where they will let you leave literature.

CARE Packages: Send CARE packages of literature to people who write for more info about your group or its politics or who express an interest in Anarchism in letters and e-mails pertaining to work your group is doing for Anarchist-related projects. It is a good idea to be networked with other Anarchists in your area so if people get information request letters, they can refer them to you so you can send the person a CARE package.

Other Collectives: Give your literature to other collectives and to friends whom you know will put your literature out. Some of them will also have THEIR OWN tabling projects. In this way, you can get more literature out than if your group were doing all the work themselves.

[Excerpted from "How To Do A Red and Black Book Project" by Scott, Insurgency Culture Collective http://www.radio4all.org/redblack/howto.html with modifications by the editor.]

Tips on Giving Speeches and Presentations

Giving speeches and presentations is one of the most basic ways that an activist can communicate their ideas. Every activist should have at least a little experience with public speaking.

Speaking Tips

Feeling some nervousness before giving a speech is natural and healthy. It shows you care about doing well. But, too much nervousness can be detrimental. Here's how you can control your nervousness and make effective, memorable presentations:

Know the room. Be familiar with the place in which you will speak. Arrive early, walk around the speaking area and try practicing using the microphone and any visual aids.

Know the audience. Greet some of the audience as they arrive. It's easier to speak to a group of friends than to a group of strangers.

Know your material. If you're not familiar with your material or are uncomfortable with it, your nervousness will increase. Practice your speech and revise it if necessary.

Relax. Ease tension by going for a walk, doing some basic stretching, chatting with colleagues.

Realize that people want you to succeed. Audiences want you to be interesting, stimulating, and informative. They don't want you to fail.

Don't apologize. If you mention your nervousness or apologize for any problems you think you have with your speech, you may be calling the audience's attention to something they hadn't noticed. Avoid pointing out your own imagined inadequacies, your audience has a higher opinion of you than you think.

Concentrate on the message -- not the medium. Focus your attention away from your own anxieties, and outwardly toward your message and your audience. Your nervousness will dissipate.

Turn nervousness into positive energy. Harness your nervous energy and transform it into vitality and enthusiasm.

Gain experience. Experience builds confidence, which is the key to effective speaking.

[Excerpted from "10 Tips For Successful Public Speaking" http://www.toastmasters.org/tips.htm with modifications by the editor.]

Tips for handling Q & A

If you don't hear the question or understand it, ask the questioner to repeat it.
Try to keep calm, even if your audience is hostile or upset.

Always respect the questioner, even if you do not like the question or the manner in which it is posed.
Don't feel offended if someone asks you a question that you feel you already answered in your presentation or a previous question, they may not have heard or understood the information previously presented.
Honesty is the best policy, if you don't know the answer to something, admit it - you can offer to get in contact the person later with an answer.

[Excerpted from "Handling Q & A" http://www.ecn.ab.ca/toast/qa.html]

Traditional Alternative media

How To Start An Alternative Campus Newspaper (In A Nutshell)
by Rich Cowan (co-founder of The Thistle at MIT)

A. Getting Started

1) Order some of the materials mentioned at the end of this article so that you will have them in time for your first meeting.

2) If you haven't already lined up a group of people interested in producing the first issue, make a friendly poster to recruit others. The poster should describe the purpose of your newspaper, solicit articles for the
first issue, and invite people to call a telephone number to ask about joining your collective. Put up at least 100 copies of your poster on campus where they will stay up for three weeks or more.

3) Ask other publications about potential local printers. Once you have their numbers, call to inquire about prices, delivery rates, turnaround time, page sizes, whether they offer recycled paper, whether they are a
union printer, etc. Make up an advertising rate sheet (sample available from the Thistle, see below) and arrange to meet with the proprietors of the four or five local businesses or campus offices which would be most likely to advertise. Once you have obtained about a page ($200-$400) worth of commitments, call the people who responded together for a first meeting.

4) You may wish to have two initial meetings: one just to get acquainted (and hand out copies of this article), and a more formal meeting to resolve the following eight key issues:

o Size of paper and masthead design
o Mission statement and guidelines for what you will print
o Procedures and requirements for article submissions, editing, and layout
o Deadlines for first issue article submissions
o Compiling list of potential advertisers and assigning people to solicit ads
o Locating computer equipment
o Dates of first editorial meeting, editing session(s), and layout
o Applying for university recognition and funding

B. The Editorial Process

1) On a blackboard, list the names and authors of the articles expected for the issue, with four check-off columns for In, Edited, Proofed, and Length. Set aside three manila folders labeled Unedited, Edited, and

Proofed.

2) Articles should be submitted both on paper and on disk if possible. When an article arrives, check it off as "in"; put the paper version in the Unedited folder. If you only receive a disk, print out a paper copy;
otherwise you may not realize that the article is "in". Write the length of the article on the blackboard. You may wish to measure length by "K", where 1K is 1,000 characters. (Using Microsoft Word, the number of
characters is displayed each time you save your work.)

3) When most of the articles are in, several copies should be made for a team of editors to read. This team could be everyone, or it could be just two people. To promote democratic decision-making, you should try a rotating group composed of one-third to one-half of the people involved in the publication.

4) At the editorial meeting, people should discuss the articles on the blackboard one by one. For each article, you can decide (usually by consensus) to "Yes, run it, possibly after some editing," or "No, don't
ever run it," or "Maybe, run only if there's extra space." If something is low priority and needs work, it generally should be postponed to the next issue so that it can be rewritten by the author. Finally, at the end of the list of articles, the editorial meeting should decide which articles are page 1 material, and which deserve the next most prominent locations: page 3, the back page, page 2, the centerfold, page 5, etc.

5) Expect the editing meeting to last at least two hours (i.e. bring food).

C. The Typing and Editing Process

1) Depending on the size of your group and whether you have access to a lab or office with many computers, you may want to have people type in and edit articles separately or work together in a common space. Generally, the latter option results in a more uniform product and is very important to training new members of your newspaper. (If there are more experienced journalists in your group who can write copy that doesn't need much editing, you can set up a special process to let them cover events which occur after your editing meeting.)

2) Before entering the articles into the computer, create three computer folders parallel to the manila folders: Unedited, Edited, and Proofed. Copy all the articles submitted on disk to the Unedited folder (it may be necessary to first convert them to the proper word-processing program format). Finally, arrange for volunteers to type in the rest of the articles.

3) Once the articles have been placed into the Unedited folder, you are ready to edit. Some common formatting guidelines for newspaper text are listed in a box below. When done editing, spell-check your articles as a final step, and save them in a readable font, with a uniform point size, such as Times 12 or Courier 12.

4) Finally print out the file and save it in the Edited computer folder. Put the printed copy in the Edited manila folder, and check off the article as Edited on the blackboard.

D. The Proofing Process.

1) The printed copy allows you to make use of volunteers who are unfamiliar with computers in the proofing process. It also makes it much easier to detect small problems like extra spaces. The person proofing the articles should fix typos only. She or he should not edit (reword) the article unless there is something seriously and obviously wrong with it. The idea is to prevent an endless series of edits. (Editing often introduces new errors into an article.) If the editing process is inadequate then more attention should be given to training and supervising editors to fix the problems before they reach the proofing stage.

2) Once you type in the proofing changes, save the file in the Proofed folder, and check off the article as Proofed on the blackboard. The printed copy can be moved to the Proofed manila folder; it is not necessary to reprint the file unless you have made changes other than those indicated on paper.

E. The Layout Process.

1) Using a page layout program like Quark XPRESS or Pagemaker, set up a "tabloid" newspaper template. It is good to place your ads before importing the articles. To indicate the location of each ad, make a box representing it at the bottom of a page where it will not interfere with headlines. Type the name of the person or group that purchased the ad in large text within the box to identify it.

2) Import all the articles from the Proofed folder into this template. You should first import them "roughly" so that they use about 50-70% of each page not including the ads. Then give each article a standard 30-point bold headline (this can be adjusted later), and set the byline off from the text (by centering, for example). You can then print

"thumbnails" of your pages to give you an idea of the amount of space available to be filled by graphics.

3) Finally, measure some graphics or photos to go along with each article. Then create "graphics boxes" using your layout program and move them to a visually pleasing location (where they usually will displace your text).

4) Adjust the sizes of the boxes, and add "pull quotes", clip art, white space near headlines, etc., so that the text of each article ends precisely at the end of a page or continues onto a page that has exactly enough space left for the continuation. Mark each continuation clearly.

5) Print out your newspaper at 65% reduction (portrait orientation) for final review before printing it at actual size.

F. Paste-up

1) Each page must be pasted together onto a printer board from two half-pages, 8 1/5" x 11". It is easiest to paste the halves together if one of the halves is cut so that it overlaps the the other half by one or two lines of text.

2) On each page, paste down line-art graphics. For photos and graphics which include shades of grey or extremely fine resolution, write a percentage and page number on the back of the graphic and put it in an envelope. This will tell the printer to "shoot in" and half-tone the graphic on the specified page at the specified reduction or enlargement percentage.

G. Printing, and Distribution

Give the printer a realistic date for publication and make sure there will be people to distribute your paper after it returns from the printer. Your newspaper won't mean anything if it stays piled in your office.

H. References

Fortunately, several books help explain the terminology of printing, mechanics of desktop publishing, methods for getting ads and handling finances, performing research, and using English in standard ways.

We recommend six publications to help campus journalists get started.

1) How To Do Leaflets, Posters, And Newsletters, by Penny Brigham et al. Available from PEP Publishers, 3519 Yorkshire, Detroit, MI 48224. $14.95; bulk discounts available.

2) The Guide To The Thistle (Alternative News Collective, MIT). For $5, they will send you this guide with a sample advertising brochure and 2 sample layouts in Quark XPRESS and Pagemaker on a Mac disk. Write to Thistle, Room W20-413, 84 Mass. Ave., Cambridge, MA 02139. Tel #(617) 253-0399.

3) The Reporters' Handbook (guide to investigative journalism), published by Investigative Reporters & Editors, University of Missouri, 100 Neff Hall, Columbia, MO 65211. Tel #(314) 882-2042.

5) A collection of $2 brochures on research, interviewing, legal issues, and Freedom of Information Act techniques from the Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press,

1735 Eye St. NW, Suite 504, Washington, DC 20006. Tel #(202) 466-6313.

It helps to run a box like the following in every issue.

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Guidelines For Submission

If you use a computer, please submit your article on a 3 1/2" diskette for a Mac or a PC compatible. We use MS-Word, but we can read most any format. Otherwise, send on paper or E-mail to <e-mail address>. Please include one or two photos or charts as it will help us give your article a more pleasing layout. You should limit your submissions to the following length unless you have worked out a longer piece with the editors:

Letters: 400 words
Features and Investigative Articles: 1500 words
Opinion Pieces: 800 words

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APPENDIX A: Helpful Editing And Formatting Procedures.

1) Text should be justified, with 1/4 inch tabs for paragraph indentation. No blank lines between paragraphs.

2) Use two spaces after a period or a colon and one after a semicolon.

3) Indicate author in centered text above the beginning of the article, followed by a blank line.

4) Place biographies/credits of authors italicized in [brackets] at the end of each article, followed by the source. [This article is excerpted from Federation of American Scientists' Government Secrecy Bulletin, May 1990].

5) Titles of publications italicized (or de-italicized, if they appear in the credit).

6) If bullets (o) are used they should be properly typed in (Option-8 on a Mac, Control-V 4,3 in Word Perfect) and they should be followed by a tab. Paragraphs marked by bullets should be indented except for the first line, which should be flush left.

7) Accent marks should be properly typed in (on a Mac, Option-n n yields the n and Option-e <vowel> yields accented vowels).

8) Spaces go before and after long dashes - like this (Option-Shift-dash on a Mac).

9) Write out acronyms the first time they are used. Use a person's last name the second time you refer to them. Adopt some standards for spelling, such as US for United States, 90's or 1990s for 1990's, right-wing (adjective) as opposed to Right Wing (noun).

10) Don't forget to mention when and where something happened and who was involved.

* * *

Doing Your Own Zine
by Sarah Dyer

http://www.houseoffun.com/action/zines/diy.html

Are you ready to do a zine?

This is probably the most important question you should ask yourself when you're considering doing a zine -- are you really ready to do one? Doing a zine can take up a lot of your time and become a big responsibility. There's no reason that you should have to do a whole zine -- if you aren't sure you can handle a zine on your own, consider maybe contributing to zines that you like or getting a couple friends to do one with you.

Also, just because anyone can do a zine doesn't mean they should. Not everyone is suited to the kind of work that goes into zines, and there's a lot of forms of creativity that just don't translate well into a zine. That said, if you have a lot of ideas and you think this is the way you want to express them, here's how to do it!

Content

What kind of stuff will be in your zine? Obviously, before you start actually making up pages you need to have some idea what you're going to put on them. Start collecting clipped stuff, pictures, notes on things you want to write. Your zine can be about any subject you want (or all the subjects you want). Once you've decided what you're going to put in your zine, start working on it -- it's a lot easier to do a zine with a bunch of work you've already finished than to try and do one from scratch.

Size and format

Once you've decided what you're going to put in your zine, you need to decide what it's going to look like – what size, and what format you'll do it in.

There are lots of formats to do a zine in. As you order zines, you'll see that some people use "nicer" printing methods -- better paper, or color. But for a first zine, your best bet is photo-coping. It's easy, you can make up copies as you need them (instead of having them all sit in piles in your closet) and the art looks clean because of the white paper. Half-size zines like this look nice, especially if they're stapled properly. You also can experiment with colored paper for the whole thing or the cover, or even an insert. The two bad things about photocopying: Collating (putting the Xeroxed pages in order) can be a real pain (a zine I worked on once had 24 full-size pages, and we made 500 copies -- it took FOREVER to put them together), and if you have a lot of pages it can get very expensive. The biggest advantage is that you can put out a zine like this with practically no money -- just get a few copies together at a time, after you get an order with money in it.

When you're copying your pages, you can do almost any size zine -- the folded-in-half size is pretty much the standard. You can also do full pages and just staple them together, or even do the pages on 11" x 17", fold them in half and staple, and voila! a zine that looks printed. Other variations I've seen: legal-size Xeroxes folded in half (makes a squarish zine) and pages that have been folded in quarters and even sixths, stapled and trimmed to make mini-zines. Remember that the size page you use will affect the number of pages in your zine -- if you do a half-size zine, every double-sided copy = 4 zine pages, so you have to have a page count that you can divide by four (8, 16, 24, etc.).

Plan on starting small -- start off with an issue with a really low page count to save money, and if you get enough to put out future issues, then start adding pages. One girl I know does incredibly tiny Xeroxed zines, but she also does a new one every time she has something new to say or show, whether it's a week later or a month. A zine doesn't have to be big to be good, that's for sure.

Layout

Once you've decided what's going into the zine, you can start worrying about making up your pages. You don't have to make the pages in the correct order, but you do need to make them the correct size. Make up a bunch of "flats" (base pages you glue everything up on) -- you can use any kind of paper for this. (If you are doing a full-size zine you might want to consider a heavy paper, like card stock, for the base.) Make the pages the size of your zine pages -- if it's a half-size zine just cut 8-1/2" x 11" paper in half, and so on. Number the pages on the back or right on the flats if you want page numbers in your zine. When that's all done, you can paste up anything you want onto the pages. (Keep in mind that a Xerox machine will cut off about 1/8-1/4" on the edges, so don't put anything important too near the sides.)

Next figure out how many pages you're going to have, and start working out what you want to put on each page. If your zine is full size, it's pretty simple, but if it's a half-sized zine, you're going to have to lay them out and copy them in the right order for them to come out the way you want. The easiest way to do this is to make up a blank zine, the length that yours is going to be. Fold the pages in half and make it the same size as yours. Go from front to back like you're reading it, and number the pages as you go. You can also make notes on what you want to put on each page. When you're finished making up all your individual pages, you can take it apart, and just glue the flats down on the blank numbered pages wherever you want them to go. Now you have a double-sided original, which will make it easier to remember how to Xerox them.

The stuff on the pages

TEXT: the text (writing) in your zine can be done any way you want -- from handwritten to nicely typeset. Handwriting is an option if your handwriting is VERY legible (ask someone else if you aren't sure how legible it is) and you use a good black pen. Don't use colored pens, and never use a ball-point. Typing on anything from an old manual typewriter to some spiffy new electronic one will always work. Try marking the outline of the area you want filled with type in pencil on a regular size sheet of paper, and then type directly on it, following the outline. Then erase the pencil, cut it out and paste down. And if you have access to a desktop computer or even a good word processor (if you don't know anyone with one, try school) you can actually typeset stuff for your zine.

ART: as far as art goes, anything that's black and white (even if the "white" part is grayish or yellowed), like drawings or stuff you've cut out of magazines, will usually come out just fine. You can photocopy most colors, too -- try different things out. And you can copy almost anything to make a background pattern -- I've put half my clothes on a copying machine at one time or another. Experiment! One of the big advantages to photocopying is that you can reproduce so many things with no extra cost or effort.

PHOTOS: photographs should be black and white, although most color pictures will reproduce okay. Again, you'll have to experiment. They should be as focused and clear as possible. You can either paste the actual photo into place if it's the right size, or you can Xerox it and paste the Xerox into your page. If you want them to really look like photos, you can get a "half-tone" made. A half-tone makes a "continuous-tone image" (like a photo or pencil drawing, things with grays in them) into a black-and-white dot pattern that looks like a photo, but actually isn't. If you look closely at any (black and white) photo in a newspaper, you'll see that they are really made up of a lot of little dots. Halftones should be pretty easy for you to get, but they usually aren't cheap. The best thing would be to look in the yellow pages -- try printers, graphics, maybe advertising production if they have it. Any place that says it has "full production services" is a very likely bet. Spend an afternoon calling them up and asking if they do halftones. Most of them will say no, but in case you find a lot, ask them a test price -- ask them how much, say, a 8" x 10" 85-line-screen halftone would cost. Then of course pick the cheapest and closest place you found. Or if a place seemed really friendly or helpful, it might be worth a little extra to go there. (An 85-line-screen means that the piece of equipment they use to make the half-tone has 85 lines per inch -- there's actually 85 rows of dots in each inch of the screen.) But when Xeroxing, you can use a finer or a coarser screen -- a finer screen would look more like a photo, but it might not reproduce as well. If you wanted a big dot effect you could get one done on a coarser screen, they usually go down to 45-line screens at most places. Ask them to show you some examples. Also, if you have access to someone's computer with a scanner, you can scan in the photos and print out a half-tone. Not quite as perfect, but a lot cheaper!

Pasting up pages

Once you've got all your contents organized and ready to be put together, start pasting up the pages (gluing everything down) one at a time. Don't feel rushed, you can do it in fits and starts for as long as you want – you're not on a deadline here.

You can use scissors to cut things out, or move up to x-acto knives (special knives for doing crafts and things -- you've probably seen one before, all office supply stores have them). I personally recommend the "X-ACTO gripster", which has a rubber coating on the part you hold. They're much cooler. When you cut things with an x-acto, put the paper you're cutting on top of a piece of cardboard or something similar. It keeps you from cutting up the tabletop, and also makes the cutting much easier.

Paste things down with glue sticks (you can get these from any office supply also -- I recommend the
purple-tinted UHU glue stick, it's my favorite), not a regular glue like Elmer's or something -- those wet glues will make the paper buckle up really bad. Make sure you give whatever you're gluing down a good coat or it might fall off when it dries! Once you've put something down on your flat you can wiggle it around and even peel it back up if you have to, but only for about the first 10 seconds. Be careful! Make sure you're putting things where you want them. Be neat or be sloppy -- look at other zines to get inspired.

When you've finished up the individual pages, you need to get them ready to copy. If your zine is full-sized, all you have to do is put them in order. If it's half-sized (or some other wacky size), you're going to have to make originals that are the same size as the paper you're copying them onto, and in the correct order. Follow the directions under "LAYOUT" to make up your originals.

Printing (i.e. photocopying)

Once your originals are completely finished, you can go get your double-sided copies made. (If you do not have double sided originals, be very clear when placing your order if you don't do the copies yourself.) Do as many as you think you'll need, but don't feel like you have to make too many. You can always get more done. Plus, it's easier to collate smaller numbers at a time. Once you've got your copies back, you need to collate them (put them in order), and fasten them somehow. You can staple them together, leave the pages loose but folded in the right order, punch holes in the center and tie them together -- or come up with something entirely new. (A lot of people ask how you staple a big zine right in the center -- the secret is a long-reach stapler that is at least 12" long. A lot of copy shops have one available for people to use, and if you're going to be doing a lot of zines, you can find them at any big office supply place.) All done? Voila! You are a proud parent.

Finance -- budgeting your zine

I'd say that money is a consideration for almost everyone doing zines (unless you're independently wealthy or you work at a Kinko's). With your zine do you expect to: (A) lose money; (B) break even; or, (C) make a little money? If you expect to make a little money, well, think again. If you expect to lose money (not much of course), good for you. I lose money on most of my projects. But I consider the non-financial rewards to be more than worth it. (What are they, you ask? Well, mail, other zines, positive feedback, new friends, stuff like that...) And if you want to break even, well, you've got a really good chance!

You need to figure out a balance between your cost and your price -- you don't want to charge too much, but you don't want to go totally broke either. Your cost will obviously depend on the number of pages in your zine. Your price should be as low as you can afford, and will depend on your distribution. Keep in mind that $1 is a standard zine price -- if you're charging $3 (even if that's your cost), a lot of people simply won't risk $3 on something they've never seen before. Keep your zine small and keep the price low.

For example, a typical half-size zine, at 20 pages (5 double-sided Xeroxes) will cost you 65¢ at Kinko's (if you find a cheaper place, use it!!) If you charge $1 for it, you'll make a little money when you sell it in person, break even if you sell it in a store, and lose a little bit when you mail it. It should come out about even. If your zine's a little bigger, you might want to put $1 on the cover, and charge $1 + postage by mail. Like I said, sell it for as little as you possibly can -- and when pricing it you should also take into consideration how many you plan on doing. Losing 25¢ each on 50 copies is a few day's lunch money. But 25¢ each on hundreds of copies could break you for sure.

Distribution

There are several ways to get a zine out into the world, including: giving out/selling copies yourself (at shows or school or whatever); doing mail-order yourself; having other mail-order/distribution places handle copies; and, selling it in stores.

Distributing it yourself involves two possibilities, doing it in person or through the mail. In person you have the most options, you can sell it or give it away, and even sell it to some people and give it to others. Doing mail-order yourself is the most popular approach by far -- you need to figure out a price that will include postage and then get exposure for your zine through ads and reviews. (You can either charge the cover price, or add extra for shipping. A lot of zines will make it on one 32-cent stamp, others need 55-cents postage. Take a copy, or a blank one of the same weight, down to the post office and find out.)

Selling directly to stores (or more likely, putting on consignment) is also an option. Any store that you or a friend can get to (on a regular basis) is a good place to try and put copies on consignment. You may have to negotiate the amount with each store individually, but you should get 60-75% of the cover price. Don't take less than 50%, ever. You'll have to make up a consignment slip and have it signed by someone with authority, unless they have one already. Usually you set a time limit on the consignment, and at the end of that time, they have to give you money for all the copies they don't have and give you back whatever's left. But you can work this out depending on your relationship with the store. There's lots of combinations of this depending on what you can afford and how into it you are. You could give it away locally in stores or at shows, but charge for it by mail. Or only do it by mail. Do whatever you feel comfortable with.

Getting exposure

If you're selling your zine by mail, there are two ways to get people to order: through ads and through reviews.

Ads are always good. A lot of smaller zines will trade ads for free, and classified ads in bigger zines can get a really good response.

Reviews are very important -- not only can you get orders from them, but good reviews will help you get ads, distributors and encourage people to pick your zine up if they see it somewhere. Other places you send copies to will be determined by the content of your zine. Judge for yourself whether you think the readers of a particular publication would be likely to like your zine. When sending a review copy, it's a MUST to attach/enclose a note which clearly states your name, the name of the zine, your address, and mail-order price of the zine.

Trade copies with other small zines like yours, especially if they list other zine addresses. (And list addresses of zines you like in return.)

Whatever you decide to do, remember that this is supposed to be FUN. If you start getting burnt out, or sick of doing zines, then stop. Fill your orders, but don't feel like you have to keep putting out new issues. If you want to change the name or content of your zine, go right ahead! There are no rules -- you can do whatever you want!

* * *

Microradio

Micropower Broadcasting - A Technical Primer
by Stephen Dunifer
http://www.radio4all.org/how-to.html

Many people still assume that an FM broadcast station consists of rooms full of equipment costing tens of thousands of dollars. The Micropower Broadcasting, Free Radio Movement has shown this to be untrue.
Micropower broadcasting uses FM transmitters whose power output is in the range of 1/2 to 40 watts. Such transmitters have a physical size that is not greater than that of your average brick. These transmitters combined with other equipment including inexpensive audio mixers, consumer audio gear, a power supply, filter and antenna enable any community to put its own voice on the air at an average cost of $1000-$1500. This is far more affordable than the tens or hundreds of thousands required by the current FCC regulatory structure.

All of the technical aspects of putting together a micropower broadcasting station are covered in the following material. It is important to note that the main argument the FCC uses against micropower broadcasting is the issue of interference with other broadcast services. Interference is a valid concern. By using equipment that is frequency stable and properly fitted with harmonic suppression filters along with good operating procedures and standards, the FCC's argument can be effectively neutralized.

Further, the technical aspects of micropower broadcasting require some basic knowledge in the areas of electronics and broadcast practices. Hopefully, this primer will be able to convey some of this knowledge to you. If you are unsure of your abilities try to find someone who has the technical experience to help you. It is hoped that as this movement grows a network of people with the required technical skills will be formed to assist in the process of empowering every community with its own voice. If you are a person with engineering or technical experience, please contact Free Radio Berkeley to become part of this network.

Finding a Frequency

Before you can proceed any further you must determine if there are any available frequencies in your area. Due to frequency congestion in the large urban metroplexes such as Chicago, Boston, LA, NYC, etc. this may be a bit difficult. You will need several items to do a frequency search: a listing of the all the FM radio stations within a 50-70 mile radius of your area; and a digitally tuned radio. There are several databases on the world wide web which can be searched for FM radio stations in any given area. Here is one: www.airwaves.com/fccdb.html

Channel separation is the biggest problem. FM broadcast frequencies are assigned a frequency channel 200 kilohertz wide. Good broadcasting practice requires that at least one channel of separation must exist on either side of the frequency you intend to use. In other words, if you have picked out 90.5 as a possible frequency then 90.3 and 90.7 should be clear of any receivable signals. This is why a digital receiver is an important item for the frequency search.

Once you have a complete listing of all the FM radio stations look for possible frequencies with the appropriate channel spacing. Depending on topography, distance and the output power of the other stations certain "used" frequencies may in fact be open. Compile a list of the possible frequencies. Then, using a digital FM receiver with an external antenna, scan and check these frequencies. Do this from a number of locations and at varied times within the area you propose to cover. In most cases weak, intermittent, or static filled signals can be ignored and counted as either usable or providing the necessary channel separation. Hopefully you will find at least one or two usable frequencies. If you live in a more rural area or some distance from a large urban area, finding a usable frequency should not be very difficult. 87.9 can be used as a frequency under two conditions. One, if there is not an existing station on 88.1, and two if there is not a TV Channel 6 being used in your area.

After compiling your list of possible frequencies have your friends check them out on their receivers or radios as well. It is helpful to do since a variety of different receivers will more accurately reflect the listening conditions in your area. After all of this you should have a workable list of frequencies to use.

Location of Studio and Transmitter

Before you set up the station an adequate location must be found. Since the antenna will be there as well a site with adequate elevation is required. Ideally the top of a hill or a spot somewhere on the side of hill overlooking the area of coverage is best. FM transmission is "line of sight" the transmitting antenna and
receiving antenna must be able to "see" each other. Therefore, any large obstructions will have a tendency to block the signal path. Keep this in mind when choosing your location. If your site is a 1 to 3 story building, a 30 foot push up style mast attached and guyed to the roof or a

TV antenna style tower bracketed to the side of the building will be needed to provide adequate height for the antenna. At the very least you need to have the antenna at least 40-50 feet above the ground. In some areas a building permit may be needed to attach a mast or tower to a building.

It is good practice to keep the transmitter some distance from the audio studio since the radio frequency
emissions from the transmitter can get into the audio equipment and cause noise and hum. Your transmitter should be set up in another room, attic space, etc. as close to the antenna as possible. Keep the distance from the transmitter to antenna as short as possible to minimize signal loss in the coaxial cable feeding the antenna. These are some of the basic issues regarding site selection. Landlords, room mates, leases etc. are your problem.

FM Transmitters

FM is an abbreviation for Frequency Modulation. Modulation is how information is imparted to a radio
frequency signal. In the case of FM the audio signal modulates what is called the carrier frequency (which is the frequency of the broadcast signal) by causing it to shift up and down ever so slightly in response to the level of the audio signal. An FM radio receives this signal and extracts the audio information from the radio frequency carrier by a process called demodulation.

Modulation of the signal takes place within the FM broadcast transmitter. The transmitter consists of several different sections: the oscillator, phase locked loop, and gain stages. Generation of the broadcast carrier frequency is the responsibility of the oscillator section. Tuning (as distinct from modulation) or changing the frequency of the oscillator section is either done electronically or manually. For a practical radio station that will be operated for more than a few minutes, it is almost essential to have the tuning done under electronic control since free running or manually tuned oscillators will drift in frequency due to temperature and inherent design limitations. This is an important consideration is selecting a transmitter. Since one of the goals is to deprive the FCC of technical objections to micropower broadcasting it is critical to have transmitters that stay on frequency and do not drift. This, of course, rules out using transmitters based on free running oscillators.

Frequency control brings us to the next section. Oscillator frequency drift is corrected by a circuit known as a phase lock loop (PLL) controller. In essence, it compares the output frequency of the oscillator to a reference frequency. When the frequency starts to drift it applies a correction voltage to the oscillator which is voltage tuned, keeping it locked to the desired frequency. In a PLL circuit the frequency is selected by setting a series of small switches either on or off according to the frequency setting chart that comes with the transmitter. In some cases the switch array may be replaced by 4 dial-up switches that show a number for the FM frequency of transmission, i.e. 100.1 for 100.1 MHz. Even simpler, some units have a display like a digital radio with up and down buttons for changing frequency.

One part of the oscillator section, the voltage tuning circuit, serves a dual purpose. As described above it allows the oscillator to be electronically tuned. In addition, it is the means by which the broadcast carrier frequency is modulated by an audio signal. When the audio signal is applied to this section the variations in the audio signal voltage will cause the frequency of the oscillator to shift up and down. Frequency shifts brought about by audio modulation are ignored by the PLL controller due to the inherent nature of the circuit design. It is important not to over modulate the transmitter by applying an audio signal whose level is too great. Many transmitters are equipped with an input level control which allows one to adjust the degree of modulation. Further control of the audio level is provided by a compressor/limiter which is discussed in the studio section.

As the modulation level increases the amount of space occupied by the FM signal grows as well. It must be kept within a certain boundary or interference with adjacent FM broadcast channels will result. FCC regulations stipulate a maximum spread of plus or minus 75,000 cycles centered about the carrier frequency. Each FM channel is 200,000 cycles wide. Over modulation- the spreading of the broadcast signal beyond these boundaries- is known as splatter and must be avoided by controlling the modulation level. As a result the signal will be distorted and interference with adjacent channels will take place.

Following the oscillator section are a series of gain stages which buffer and amplify the signal, bringing it to a sufficient strength for FM broadcast purposes. In most cases this will be 1/2 to 1 watt of output power. This level is sufficient for a broadcast radius of 1-2 miles depending on circumstances. For increased power a separate amplifier or series of amplifiers are used to raise the power level even higher. Amplifiers are covered in the next part of this primer.

Transmitters are available in kit form from a number of different sources including Free Radio Berkeley, Progressive Concepts, Panaxis and Ramsey. Assembly requires a fair degree of technical skill and knowledge in most cases. Free Radio Berkeley offers an almost fully assembled 1/2 watt PLL transmitter kit requiring a minimal amount of assembly. Kits from Ramsey are rather debatable in terms of broadcast quality. An English firm Veronica makes some rather nice kits as well.

Amplifiers

Although 1/2 to 1 watt may be perfectly adequate for very localized neighborhood radio coverage, higher power will be required to cover larger areas such as a town or a portion of a large urban area. In order to increase the output power of a low power FM exciter or transmitter an amplifier or series of amplifiers are connected to the output of the transmitter. Amplifiers are also referred to as amps, and should not be confused with the unit of current also called amps.

Amplifiers are much simpler in design and construction than a transmitter. Most of the amplifiers used in micropower broadcasting employ only one active device, an RF power transistor, per stage of amplification. By convention most broadcast amplifiers have an input and output impedance of 50 ohms. This is similar to audio speakers having an impedance between 4 and 8 ohms. When an RF amplifier with a 50 ohm input impedance is attached to the 50 ohm output impedance of a transmitter this matching of impedances assures a maximum flow of electrical energy or power between the two units.

A mismatch between any elements in the chain from transmitter to amplifier to filter to antenna will reduce the efficiency of the entire system and may result in damage if the difference is rather large. Imagine the results if a high pressure water pipe 4 inches in diameter is forced to feed into a 1/2" water pipe with no decrease in the action of the pump feeding the 4 inch pipe. In an RF amplifier the RF power transistor will heat up and self-destruct under analogous conditions.

An RF power amplifier consists of an RF power transistor and a handful of passive components, usually
capacitors and inductors which are connected in a particular topology that transforms the 50 ohm input and output impedances of the amplifier to the much lower input and output impedances of the RF power transistor. Detailed circuit theory of this interaction between the components is not covered in this primer.

Amplifiers can be categorized as either narrow band or broad band. Narrow band amplifiers are tuned to one specific frequency. Broad band amplifiers are able to work over a specified range of frequencies. Without tuning. Most of the amplifiers that have been used in micropower broadcasting are of the first type. A tunable amplifier can be a bit of a problem for those without much experience. In a typical tuned stage amplifier there will be two tuning capacitors in the input stage and two more in the output stage. If not correctly adjusted the transistor can produce unwanted sideband spurs at other frequencies both within and outside of the FM band.

To make set up easier for the average micropower broadcaster a broad band amplifier is preferable or one with a minimal amount of tuning stages. Several designs are available. One rather popular one is a 20-24 watt amplifier using a Phillips BGY33 broad band power amplifier module. It is a rather rugged device that requires no tuning and produces a full 20-24 watts output for 250 milliwatts of drive from the transmitter. Free Radio Berkeley has a kit based on this device. This kit includes an output filter as well which other vendors may not include in their kits. Regardless of the source, the BGY33 is not the most efficient device and requires a good sized heat sink for proper dissipation of heat, and the use of a cooling fan is strongly suggested as well.

If you buy a kit or transmitter package based on this device be certain to determine from the manufacturer that the BGY33 is mounted directly to the heat sink, not to a chassis panel with a heat sink on the other side of the chassis panel. It must directly contact the heat sink with a layer of heat sink heat compound between the module mounting flange and the heat sink surface.

Broad band designs are not as a common due to the degree of design experience required to create a
functional unit. It seems a number of kit providers are content not to optimize and improve their amplifier
designs. Free Radio Berkeley is now offering amplifiers that are either no tune or minimal tune designs in
several different ranges of power. Certain broad band designs may be too wide in their range of frequency coverage and will amplify the harmonics equally well. For FM broadcast purposes the width of frequency coverage should be for only the FM band, about 20-25 Megahertz wide.

Selecting the right amount of power is rather important since you should only use enough power to cover the desired area. Unfortunately there is not an easy answer to the question of how much area a certain amount of power cover. Antenna height is very critical, 5 watts at 50 feet will not go as far as 5 watts at 500 feet. Assuming you do not have a 10 story building or a convenient 500 foot hill to site your antenna and transmitter on, experience in urban environments has yielded the following rough guidelines. With based an antenna approximately 50 feet above the ground. 1/2 to 1 watt will yield an effective range of 1 to 3 miles, 5-6 watts will cover out to about 1-5 miles, 10-15 watts will cover up to 8 miles, 20-24 watts will cover up to 10-12 miles and 30-40 watts will cover up to 15 miles. Coverage will vary depending on terrain, obstructions, type of antenna, etc. If your antenna is very high above average terrain you will be able to go much further that the figures given above. Quality of the radios receiving your signal will be a determining factor as well. Since the power levels are rather low in comparison to other stations an external antenna on the receiver is highly suggested, especially an outdoor one.

It is very important to provide adequate cooling for RF amplifiers. This means using a properly sized heat sink and an external cooling fan. Heat sinks have heat dissipating fins which must be placed in an upward pointing direction. Overheating will cause premature failure of the transistor. A cooling fan, usually a 4 to 5 inch square box fan, will offer extra insurance. It should be placed so that the air flows over the fins of the heat sink.

Under no circumstances should an amplifier/transmitter be operated without a proper load attached to the
output. Failure to do so can destroy the output transistor. When testing and tuning a dummy load is used to present a load of 50 ohms to the transmitter/amplifier. It is very bad practice to tune a unit with an antenna attached Use a dummy load of proper wattage rating to match the transmitter output wattage.

An output filter must be used between the transmitter/amplifier and the antenna. Some amplifier kits come with a filter included, such as the 20 Watt FRB amplifier. These do not need an additional filter. More on this in the filter section.

Heavy gauge (12-16 AWG) insulated stranded wire is used to connect the amplifier to the power supply.
Observe correct polarity when making the connection. Reversing the polarity will result in catastrophic failure of the transmitter. Red is positive and black is negative or ground.

Power Supplies

Most of the transmitters and amplifiers used in micro broadcasting require an input voltage of 12 to 14 volts DC. Higher power amplifiers (above 40 watts) require 24-28 volts DC. In a fixed location the voltage is provided by a power supply which transforms the house voltage of 110 volts AC to the proper DC voltage.

Power supplies are not only measured in terms of their voltage but current as well. A higher power amplifier is going to require a greater amount of input power as compared to a lower power amplifier. Output current is measured and specified as amps. A power supply is selected on the basis of its continuos current output which should be higher than the actual requirements of the amplifier. Power supplies operated at their fully rated output will have a tendency to overheat under continuos operation. An amplifier which requires 8 amps will need a power supply with a 10 to 12 amp continuos capacity. In most cases the following ratings are suggested for transmitters requiring 13.8 volts.

1-5 Watt Transmitter 2-3 Amps
10-15 Watt Transmitter 5-6 Amps
20-24 BGY33 Based Unit 10 Amps
40 Watt Transmitter 12 Amps

Any power supply you use must have a regulated voltage output along with protection circuitry. Some
reasonably priced brands include Pyramid, Triplite and Astron. Do not use any of the wall transformer type of power supplies. Such units are not adequate for this application. Higher power transmitters require power supplies with an output voltage of 28 volts. Astron is the best manufacturer of this type of power supply. A 75 watt transmitter will require a power supply with a current rating of 6-8 amps and 28 volts.

For mobile applications voltage can be fed from the cigarette lighter socket of a car with the correct plug and heavy gauge wiring. This may not work well in some newer vehicles with are reported to have some sort of current limit protection on the lighter socket. Check with an auto mechanic about this if you are in doubt. Electrical systems on newer vehicles are rather sensitive and can be damaged if not properly understood.

Another problem with mobile operation is battery drain. A 20-40 watt transmitter running for 4-5 hours can deplete the battery to the point where the vehicle may not start. It is better to have separate battery running parallel to the charging system with an isolator. Isolators are available from Recreational Vehicle accessory suppliers. Use a high capacity deep discharge type of battery.

Lead acid batteries are not very benign. Acid can leak and spill on people, clothing and equipment. It best to keep the battery in a plastic battery box. Vapors from the battery are explosive in confined areas. Keep this in mind for mobile vehicle operations. You might consider using a gell cell type of battery which is sealed and can not leak. These are a bit pricey but have far fewer problems. A good quality gel charger must be used to ensure battery longevity.

Smaller gel cell batteries work really well for setting up a low power (6 watts or less) transmitter on a street corner as a public demonstration of micropower radio. In Berkeley a 6 watt micropower station is set up at the local flea market as a community demonstration on weekends. It is called Flea Radio Berkeley. Transmitters can be set up at demonstrations and rallies so motorists can tune their radios to the frequency which is displayed on large banners near the streets and listen in on what is happening. This has worked very well. Use your imagination to show how micropower broadcasting can be brought into the community.

Filters

Although it is rather simple in design and construction a filter is one of the most important elements in broadcasting. No matter what, a proper filter must be used between the transmitter and antenna. Use of a filter will help deprive the FCC of one of its main arguments against micropower broadcasting - interference with other broadcast services.

A proper filter reduces or eliminates harmonics from your broadcast signal. Harmonics are produced by the transmitter and are multiples of the fundamental frequency you are tuned for. For example, if you broadcast at 104.1, you may produce a harmonic at 208.2, and (less likely) 312.6 and so on. Most filter designs are of the low pass type. They let frequencies below a certain frequency pass through unaffected. As the frequency increases and goes beyond that point the filter begins to attenuate any frequency that is higher than the set point. The degree of attenuation increases with the frequency. By the time the frequency of the first harmonic is reached it will be severely attenuated. This is very important since the first harmonic from an FM transmitter falls in the high VHF TV band. Failure to reduce this harmonic will cause interference to neighboring TV sets.

You do not want to generate complaints from folks who engage in the odious habit of watching TV. Noble sentiments, such as telling them to smash their TV if they have a problem will not suffice. Use a filter. Complaints increase the possibility of the FCC showing up at your door. One needs to be good broadcast neighbor and an asset to the community.

Harmonics further up the scale can cause interference to other mobile and emergency radio services. Not desirable either.

Transmitters with output power ratings of less than 25 watts will need at least a 7 pole design. Higher power units will need a 9 pole design. An increase in number of poles increase the degree of attenuation. Representative designs are shown. If you build one of these put it in a metal, well shielded enclosure.

Not really related to filters but an important side issue is the use of FM frequencies at the bottom and top ends of the band. Do not use 87.9 to 88.3 or so if their is a channel 6 TV frequency being used in your local area. Television sets have notoriously poor selectivity and your signal might end up coming in on the sound carrier of the TV if channel six is being used. At the top end of the band do not go any higher than 106 MHz if the transmitter is near an airport. In fact, do everything possible not be too close - at least several miles and away from the flight path(s). Even though interference possibilities are minimal there is not any point in taking chances since the FCC has claimed airplanes will fall from the sky if micropower broadcasting is given free reign. Corner cutting corporate airline maintenance polices most likely pose a greater danger to public safety than micropower broadcasting, however

Antennas

An antenna's primary purpose is to radiate the FM broadcast signal from the transmitter to surrounding FM radio receivers. In order to do this several conditions must be met. First, the antenna must be tuned to the frequency being transmitted. Secondly, it must be sited and oriented properly.

At FM frequencies the radio waves travel in a straight line until an obstacle is met. This is known as line of sight transmission. If the receiving antenna and transmitting antenna can "see" each other and the path distance is not too great to attenuate the signal, then the broadcast signal can be received. Radio signal strength is based on the inverse square law. Double the distance and the signal strength will be 1/4 of what it was.

Since FM broadcast transmissions are line of sight, the height of the antenna is very important. Increasing the height is more effective than doubling or tripling the power. Due to the curvature of the earth the higher the antenna the greater the distance to the horizon. Increased height will place the antenna above obstructions which otherwise would block the signal. Your antenna should be at least 40-50 feet above the ground. Count yourself lucky if you can site the antenna on a hill or a ten story building.

An antenna is rough tuned by adjusting the length of the radiating element(s). Many antenna designs are based on or derived from what is called a dipole, two radiating elements whose length is roughly equivalent to 1/4 of the wavelength of the desired frequency of transmission. Wavelength in inches is determined by dividing 11811 by the frequency in megahertz. The result is either divided by 4 or multiplied by .25 to yield the 1/4 wavelength. A correction factor of .9 to .95, depending on the diameter of the element, is multiplied times the 1/4 wavelength resulting in the approximate length of each element.

Fine tuning the antenna requires the use of an SWR power meter. SWR is an abbreviation for standing wave ratio which is the ratio between power going into the antenna and the power being reflected back by the antenna. A properly tuned antenna is going to reflect very little power back. Correct use of an SWR meter is described a bit further down in this section. IF you can afford $100. get a dual needle meter which shows both reflected and forward power at the same time. A good brand is Daiwa.

A dipole with tuning stubs is one of the easiest antennas to make and tune. Two dipoles can be combined on a 10 foot mast if they are spaced 3/4 of a wavelength from center to center with the elements vertical and fed with a phasing harness. A phasing harness consists of two 1.25 wavelength pieces of 75 ohm coaxial cable (RG11) cut to a length that is the product of the 1.25 wavelength times the velocity factor (supplied by the manufacturer) of the cable A PL259 plug is attached to the end of each cable. These are connected to a 259 T adapter with the center socket being the connection for the feed cable coming from the transmitter. The other ends go respectively to each dipole. Such an arrangement will increase the power going into the antenna by a factor of 2.

Besides the dipole a number of other antenna designs are employed in micropower broadcasting. Each one has a characteristic pattern of coverage. Antennas can be broken down into two basic types – omnidirectional and directional. Under most circumstances the omni is the antenna of choice for micropower broadcasting. Polarization is another aspect to consider but does not play that big of a role in most cases. Antennas can be vertically, horizontally or circular in polarization. Most micro broadcast antennas are vertically polarized. In theory a vertically oriented receiving antenna will receive better if the transmitting antenna is vertically oriented as well. Obstructions in the receiving environment will have a tendency to bounce the signal around so that the signal will be not be exactly vertically polarized when it hits the receiving antenna, particularly in a car that is moving. Commercial broadcasters employ circular polarization which yields both vertical and horizontal components to the signal. It is said that this is best for car radios. This may be true given the dependence of commercial broadcasters on "drive time" as a peak listening period.

A single radiating element vertically oriented will have a rather high angle of radiation where a good portion of the signal is going up to the sky at angle of around 35 degrees or more. When you combine two vertical elements such as two dipoles you reduce the angle of radiation to a point where the signal is more concentrated in the horizontal plane. This is what accounts for the apparent doubling of radiated power when you use two dipoles phased together. Power output from the antenna or antenna array is known as effective radiated power (ERP) and is usually equal to or greater than the input power.

Several vertical element antenna designs have a lower angle of radiation even though they only use one
element. These are the J-Pole and the Slim Jim designs. Having a signal pattern that is more compressed into the horizontal plane makes the Slim Jim ideal for urban environments. Both can be easily constructed from ½" copper pipe and fittings. Plans are available from FRB directly or the FRB web site.

Another class of antennas are the 1/4 and 5/8 wave ground plane antennas. A commercially manufactured 5/8 ground plane for FM broadcast purposes is available for around $100. It is an ideal antenna for those want an easy to tune and assemble antenna. Set up time is less than 15 minutes. Plans for these antennas are available from FRB.

Directional antennas are not usually required for micropower broadcasting. If the area you wish to cover lies in one particular direction you might consider the use of such an antenna. An easy way to do this is to put a reflecting screen 1/4 of a wavelength behind a vertical dipole. The screen will need to be bit taller than the total length of the elements and about 2-3 feet wide. This will yield a nice directional pattern with a fair amount of power gain Your pattern will be about 60-70 degrees wide. Another type of directional antenna is the yagi which has a basic dipole as the radiating element but additional elements as reflectors and directors. A yagi can be a bit difficult to build for those not well versed in antenna design and construction. Your best choice is a dipole with a reflector.

For those who wish for a practical design that can be built and put to use the following is a basic dipole antenna which can be constructed from common hardware store items. It uses 1/2 inch copper water pipe and fittings along with aluminum tubing. A half inch plastic threaded T is used with a copper 1/2 inch threaded to 1/2 inch slip adapters at all three points. An aluminum tube 9/16 of inch or so in diameter will fit into this slip adapter and is attached with two #6 self tapping sheet metal screws. This tubing is 20 inches long. Another piece of aluminum tubing 15 inches long with a diameter small enough to slip inside the other tubing is used as the adjustable tuning element. Four slots 90 degrees apart and 1 1/2 inches long are cut into in one end of the larger tubing. A small diameter hose clamp is slipped over that end. With the smaller tubing inserted inside the hose clamp is tightened to hold it in place. This is repeated for the second element. A copper half inch thread to slip adapter is soldered to one end of a 36 inch piece of 1/2 copper tubing which is the support arm for the dipole. A copper T is soldered to the other end. Then, two 3 inch pieces of 1/2 inch copper tubing are soldered to the T fitting. This allows easy clamping to a mast. A solder lug is attached to each element using one of the self tapping screws holding the elements to the slip fittings. Your coaxial cable will be attached to these solder lugs. Center conductor to one, braid or shield to the other. You can get a little fancier and make an aluminum bracket to hold an SO239 socket and attach this to the T connector.

Once you have it all put together as shown in the diagram it is time to tune it. Adjust the element lengths to the 1/4 wave length you arrived at with the above formula. Tighten the clamps so the tuning stubs can barely slide back and forth. Mark each stub where it enters the larger tubing. Using either hose clamps or U clamps attach the antenna to the end of a mast piece 10 feet long. The element to which the braid or shield of the coax is attached must be pointing down Support the mast so that is stands straight up with the antenna at the top. It is best to do this outside.

Set up your transmitter and connect an SWR/Power meter between the transmitter and the antenna. Adjust your meter to read SWR according to the directions that came with it. SWR is the ratio of power coming from the transmitter and the power reflected back from the antenna. A properly tuned antenna will reflect very little power back, resulting in a very low SWR ratio. Too much reflected power can damage the transmitter.

Turn on the transmitter and observe the SWR or amount of reflected power. Shut the transmitter off if the level is very high and check your connections. Rough tuning the antenna by measurements should have brought the readings down to a fairly low level. Turn off the transmitter and adjust each tubing stub up or down about 1/4 of an inch. Turn the transmitter back on and note the readings. If the reflected power and SWR ratio went lower you went the right direction in either increasing or decreasing the length of the stubs. Turn off the transmitter and continue another 1/4 inch in the same direction or the opposite direction if the SWR ratio and reflected power increased. Turn the transmitter on again. If the reading is lower continue to go in the same direction in 1/4 inch increments being sure to turn off the transmitter to make the adjustments. Continue to do this cycle until you have reached the lowest possible reading. At some point the readings will start to increase again. Stop there.

You can do this with two dipoles as mentioned earlier in this section. Each dipole is tuned by itself and then both are connected with a phasing harness when mounted to the mast section.

Connectors and Cable

Radio frequency cables are referred to as coax as a generic term. It is short for coaxial. A coaxial cable
consists of an inner conductor inside an insulating core .This is surrounded on the outside by a metal braid or foil, called the shield .This shield is in turn covered by an insulating jacket of plastic material. Coaxial cables are specified in terms of impedance which for most micropower broadcasting purposes is 50 ohms except for dipole phasing harnesses.

In the 50 ohm category there are a number of choices when selecting coaxial cable. The most important
characteristic of coax is it's level of signal attenuation. This depends on the length of the cable and its particular frequency response. RG58 coaxial cable has a high degree of attenuation and should only be used for short connections. RG8X or mini 8 works well for lengths under 50 feet and is suited for portable and mobile set ups since it is rather flexible. RG8 and its higher performance cousins such as 213 and Belden 9913 are the best for fixed installations. Belden 9913 has the lowest loss for any given

length as compared to other variations of RG8. In fact, it has a loss figure at 100 MHz that compares well with commercial broadcast hard-line coax. It is rather stiff cable and must be installed correctly.

Coaxial cables do not take rough treatment very well, especially 9913. They must be carefully rolled up by hand, not wrapped between palm of hand and elbow like a rope. Kinks are to be avoided at all costs. When routing a cable keep the bends from being sharp and keep it away from circumstances where it can be pinched or slammed.

Three types of connectors are in general use - BNC, PL259 and N. Most micropower broadcasting equipment uses PL259 and its mating socket known as the SO239. Any connector will introduce some small degree of signal loss. N connectors are used where high performance and reliability are of most importance.

Studio Setup

A typical broadcast studio consists of an audio mixer (DJ style works best), one or more CD players, one or more cassette tape decks, a turntable or two, several microphones, and a compressor/limiter. Optional items can include a cart machine and a phone patch.

Reasonable quality mixers start at $200 and go up in price from there. DJ styles are best since they have a large number of inputs available and support turntables without the need of external phono preamps. Any mixer you select should have least 2 or more microphone input channels. These should be low impedance inputs. Other features to look for include high visibility VU (level) meters, slide faders for each channel, switchable inputs for each channel, stereo or mono selection for the output signal, and an auxiliary output for an air check tape deck.

CD players and tape decks can be your average higher quality consumer audio gear. Day in and day out
usage will eventually take their toll so pay for the extra warranty period when it is offered. When one wears out in 6 months or so just take it back under warranty for either repair or replacement.

DJ style turntables are the best choice for playing vinyl. Cheaper units just will not stand up to the wear and tear of daily usage. Select a heavy duty stylus as well.

Microphones should be fairy good quality vocal types. They can be either directional or omnidirectional.
Directional microphones will pick up less ambient noise but need to be on axis with the person's mouth for best pick up. Since some folks do not pay attention to where the microphone is in relation to their mouth, an omnidirectional might be considered a better choice if this is the case. A distance of about 4 inches should be maintained between the microphone and mouth. Place a wind screen foam piece over each microphone. Some microphones have built-in shock and vibration isolation to keep bumps to the microphone from being audible. It is a good idea to use some sort of isolated holder for the DJ microphone. An old swing arm lamp can be adapted to hold a microphone.

For programmers who do a lot of reading on material on the air a headphone microphone is something to
consider since it will maintain a uniform distance from mouth to microphone no matter where the head moves to. One drawback is that they tend to be a bit fragile in rough hands.

Headphones are essential for monitoring and curing up program material. You can either opt for high quality rugged units that are a bit costly or plan on replacing an inexpensive set every few months.

A limiter/compressor is an essential part of the audio chain. It is used to keep the audio signal from exceeding a preset level. Without this the transmitter will be overmodulated resulting in signal splatter and distortion. Signal splatter will cause interference with adjacent stations and distortion will send your listeners elsewhere.

Common to most limiter/compressors are a set of controls - input level, output level, ratio, threshold, attack and decay. To properly set up the mixer, limiter/compressor and transmitter you start with a steady audio source (a signal generator plugged into the board or a test tone CD, tape or record). You adjust the input level and master output level controls so that the meters are reading zero dB. Master level should be at mid position. Audio output goes from the mixer to the limiter/compressor and from there to the transmitter. Do not turn the transmitter on at this time.

Most limiter/compressors have indicator lights or meters to show how much gain reduction is being applied and the output level. Set the ratio control to the infinity setting, this enables hard limit function. Attack and decay can be set around mid position. Adjust the threshold and the input level until the gain reduction shows activity. Adjust the output level so that the indicator lights or meters show a 0 dB output level.

Turn the level input on the transmitter all the way down and power up the transmitter. Monitor the signal on good quality radio. Slowly turn the level control until you can hear the test tone. Compare the signal level to that of other stations. Your level should be slightly less since most other operations are using quite a bit of audio processing on their signal. You may have to make fine adjustments to the limiter/compressor to get things exactly right.

When everything is set up correctly any audio signals that exceed 0 dB on the board will be kept at that level by the compressor/limiter. You will need to listen carefully to the signal to make sure when a "hot" audio source exceeds this that the transmitted signal keeps an even level and does not distort or splatter. There will be some interplay between the output level and the threshold setting. Nor do you want a signal that is too low in level either since that will produce a weak sounding broadcast.

A very important consideration is to keep as much distance between the studio gear and the transmitter as possible. RF (radio frequency signals) will find their way into audio equipment and produce a hum or other types of noise. You can separate the two areas by using a low impedance cable between the
limiter/compressor and the transmitter. This can be a long microphone cable with XLR connectors or a made up shielded 2 conductor cable with XLR connectors. You can have about 150 feet of cable maximum. A high impedance to low impedance transformer will be needed at one end or both depending on whether the limiter/compressor and transmitter have low or high impedance connections. These transformers usually have an XLR female connector on the low impedance side and a 1/4" phone plug on the high impedance side. If your transmitter has an RCA style input you will need the proper adapter to go from 1/4" phone plug to the RCA plug.

Your studio should be arranged to provide easy access to all controls and equipment with plenty of table space. An L or horseshoe shape works well for the studio bench. An open area within the sight line of the operator should be provided so their will be a place for extra microphones and guests.

Final Word

Although it seems like there is a lot to deal with in setting up a micropower station, it can be broken down into three areas- studio, transmitter and antenna. It should not be difficult to find someone with studio set-up experience to help with the project. Transmitters, particularly their construction and tuning, should be left to an experienced person. If such a person is not available there are a number of people who will assemble, test and tune your transmitter for whatever fee they have set. Stick to a commercial, easy to tune antenna such as the Comet if your skills are minimal. These can be purchased pre-tuned for an additional fee from FRB and L. D. Brewer. It best to put most of the energy into organizing and setting up the station.

Experience has shown that once the technical operation is in place and running, it will require very little in the way of intervention except for routine maintenance (cleaning tape heads, dusting, etc.) and occasional replacement of a tape or CD player.

What requires most attention and "maintenance" is the human element, however. More time will be spent on this than any equipment. As a survival strategy it is best to involve as much of the community as possible in the radio station. The more diverse and greater number of voices the better. It is much easier for the FCC to shut down a "one man band" operation than something serving an entire community. Our focus is on empowering communities with their own collective voice, not creating vanity stations. Why imitate commercial radio ?

Before you commit to your first broadcast it would be advisable to have an attorney available who is sympathetic to the cause. Even though they may not be familiar with this aspect of the law there is a legal web site which offers all of the material used in the Free Radio Berkeley case. There are enough briefs and other materials available to bring an attorney up to speed http://www.nlgcdc.org.

The Internet and Independent Media

Using Mailing Lists for Outreach and Organizing

Creating your email list

We're going to begin by reviewing the features available in the email software you are already using to send and receive individual messages, the email list services that are available through activist organizations and commercial Web sites, and the mailing list software that you can install and use in-house if your organization maintains its own "server." (A "server" is a computer that is connected to the Internet and used to host one or more Web sites.) We will also be reviewing the different ways you can set up and use email lists to communicate with your members, supporters, volunteers, and the media.

Using your regular email software

The simplest way to create and use email lists is to do it in-house using your regular email software. This option is a good choice if your list has no more than a couple hundred subscribers at most.

There are two common ways you send E-mail: One is a personal note, addressed to an individual or to a small group of people. When you send an individual message, you type the recipient's email address in the "To" field, and you might also type a second recipient's address in the "Cc" field.

The other way -- which is useful for email activism -- is to use the address book feature in your E-mail software program. This is a very useful tool for individual activists and for organizations in which the staff has little technical expertise. All email software programs have a feature that lets you set up an address book, and most will let you store hundreds or even thousands of names in the address book. Many people use this function to store the individual email addresses of friends and acquaintances. But it is also possible to use this function to create a simple announcement-only mailing list, which you can then use to distribute messages to a large number of people.

For example, if your organization periodically sends out press releases, you can set up a personalized address book, labeled "Media," that includes a list of the email addresses of all the reporters you know who are interested in the issues your organization is working on. Using the address book feature makes it possible to send the press release to all of the reporters at once, rather than e-mailing the message individually to each reporter.

If you plan to use your address book to create an email list, you will need to know how to send E-mail without disclosing the recipients' addresses. So if you haven't already been introduced to the "Bcc" field, it's time to get acquainted. ("Bcc" is an acronym for "blind carbon copy." Along with "Cc" for "carbon copy" the term has its origins in the days when typists made copies of documents by placing carbon-coated paper between sheets of regular paper before typing.)

At the top of every email message, you'll (usually) see a header with these fields:

==
==================================

To:
From:
Subject:
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachment

==
==================================

NOTE: In some email software, "Bcc" is not included in the default setting of the header display. If you don't see it, check the "Help" file or the User Manual that came with the software, or contact the company's support service by phone or email.

To send a press release to your "Media" address book, type "Media" in the "Bcc" field of the message header and put your own email address in the "To" field. That way, all of the reporters will receive the message, but only your email address will be disclosed. (And you'll get a copy of whatever you send, since your address will be in the "To" field.)

CAUTION: ALWAYS use the "Bcc" field if you are creating an email list in your address book. If you type the address book's name in the "To" or "Cc" field, all of the addresses will appear in the "To" field when the message is sent! There are two problems with this. First, some people prefer not to disclose their email address, and if the list has a lot of addresses the header will be long. Do you like seeing something like the following when you open an email message?

==
===================================

From: "Jane Doe" <janedoe@hotmail.com>
To: James King <JKing@msn.com>, Alan Williams <awilliams@sirius.com>,
Dave Garrison <DG@aol.com>, "Jennifer Reilly" <Reilly@Reilly.com>,
"George Kelly" <Gkelly@pacbell.net>, "Thomas Jones" <tj54@aol.com>,
Gina Rogers <GinaR@uswest.com>, Dan Stevens <dans@yahoo.com>,
Vincent Davis <vince@att.net>, Ron Butler <ronbutler@dnai.com>,

"Marc Smith" <marc_smith@earthlink.net>, Tony Altura <tonya@food.org>, "Jeffrey Carr" <carr867@aol.com>, "Michael Milton" <mmilton@ucla.edu>, Peter Boyd <pboyd@mindspring.com>, "Susan Smith" <ss@home.com>

==
===================================

In contrast, here's what you'll see when you use the "Bcc" field to distribute a long list of names:

==
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Date: Mon, 11 Sep 2000 09:07:38 -0700
To: audrie@netaction.org
From: Audrie Krause
Subject: NetAction Urges Consumer Protection For Software Buyers

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Most Web email services, like YahooMail and HotMail, also offer address books as part of their free service. These can also be used to store large numbers of email addresses. If you use a Web E-mail service, be sure to check if there is a limit to the number of email addresses that can be stored in the address book.

[NOTE: The editor uses and recommends Pegasus Mail for Windows. It's easy to use, NOT vulnerable to virus attacks like Microsoft Outlook, and can be downloaded for free from the Pegasus Mail Web site http://www.pmail.com. For Macs, use the free Eudora mail client.]

Another important issue to deal with is backing up the email addresses that you have stored in your address book. A fatal crash of your computer's hard drive could wipe out months or years of collected addresses, so be sure to back up these names. If your organization has a network administrator, make arrangements to have this information backed up regularly. If not, copy the address book onto a floppy or zip disk regularly, or buy and use a backup software product. If you are using a Web email service, learn how to back up your data, also.

Other email list software options

There are also some E-mail list software products and services specifically for managing mailing lists. The three main types that you might use are activist ISPs, Web-based Application Service Provider (ASP) services, and list software for mail servers. These options are useful for lists with hundreds or thousands of names.

Activist E-mail Account and List Providers and Alternatives

There are activist organizations that offer free E-mail accounts and mailing lists to activists, like TAO http://www.tao.ca, Cat@lyst http://www.cat.org.au/main.html, Sindominio http://www.sindominio.net, Nadir http://www.nadir.org, Mobtown http://www.mobtown.org/, and Rise Up http://www.riseup.net/ These organizations are far more trustworthy and sympathetic to activists concerns than a capitalist "free" E-mail service would be. However, they also have limited resources, therefore you may be stuck with one of the big "free" E-mail services. For other sources of free E-mail accounts (not lists), See also, HushMail http://www.hushmail.com, Disinformation http://www.disinfo.com, and Fuck Microsoft http://www.fuckmicrosoft.com.

Application Service Providers (ASP)

ASPs are commercial Internet companies that offer email list services over the Web, usually at no cost to the user. Application Service Providers that you might be familiar with are Topica, YahooGroups, and ListBot.

These services let you to set up an email list without having to install special list software, which we will discuss in the next section. The advantage of ASPs is that they automatically handle all the subscribing and unsubscribing for you. That means people will be able to join and leave the list without extra work on your part. This is particularly useful if you aren't going to individually review and approve every new subscriber.

ASPs may be a good choice for individual activists who want to set up email discussion lists, and for organizations in which a staff with limited technical expertise needs to manage multiple or large lists.

Another advantage of these services is that they automatically store all the messages on a Web site. (This is called an archive.) An archive is useful if you want to have a record of everything that has ever been posted to the list. You might want such a record so that new subscribers can read messages posted before they joined the list, or so that people can read the messages without having to subscribe to the list, but you also may not want to have an archive for reasons of security.

There are also some important disadvantages to consider. Under the user agreements, if you use their services the ASPs will own your lists, any of your work that's posted to your lists, and the content of your list archive. This gives the ASP the right to do anything it wants with this information.

Also, because these services are free, the companies that offer them add a small advertisement header or footer to each message, similar to the ones you see if you get email from someone who uses YahooMail or HotMail for Internet service. Here is an example of the type of advertisement you would see if you subscribed to an email list operated by Topica:

==
===============================

T O P I C A The Email You Want. http://www.topica.com/t/16
Newsletters, Tips and Discussions on Your Favorite Topics

==
===============================

Another downside of using one of these services is that you can't customize the list with your organization's domain name to indicate that the message was sent by your organization. (A domain name is what appears after the "www" on a Web site address. For example, "iww.org" is the domain name of The Industrial Workers of the World.) Messages sent through an ASP list might have a header that looks like this:

===
==================================

From: johndoe@yahoo.com
Subject: Support H.R. 2502!
Date: Wed, 5 Jul 2000 20:09:32 EDT
BestServHost: lists.best.com
Sender: actionalert-errors@lists.best.com
Reply-To: johndoe@yahoo.com
To: actionalert@lists.best.com

===
==================================

When you customize the list name to match your organization's domain name, the message will have a header that identifies your organization by its domain name. So it might look something like this:

===
==================================

Date: Wed, 5 Jul 2000 01:06:27 -0600 (MDT)
From: Audrie Krause

Subject: NetAction Notes No. 58
Sender: netaction-owner@netaction.org
Reply-To: audrie@netaction.org

===
===================================

If you are thinking of using a service like Topica, YahooGroups or ListBot, you'll need to weigh the advantages against the disadvantages.

Commercial in-house email list software

Another way to set up a list is to install commercial list software on your organization's "server" computer. Some of these commercial products are free, and others have to be purchased. Commercial list software is not very user-friendly. So this is only a good option if your organization runs its own in-house mail server, has a dedicated high bandwidth Internet connection, and has a network administrator.

Common software packages for handling email lists are:

Mailman http://www.list.org
Majordomo http://www.greatcircle.com/majordomo/
SmartList http://www.hartzler.net/smartlist/SmartList-FAQ.html
EZMLM http://www.ezmlm.org/

Techniques for using email lists

If you use a Web-based list service or a list software product, you'll have some decisions to make about how the list will operate. In the following section, we will be reviewing several techniques to set up and use email lists so they serve your organization's needs.

Announcement-only email lists

This configuration provides one-way communication from the list owner to the list subscribers. This configuration is good for distributing electronic newsletters, action alerts, and other information quickly, cheaply and easily to a large number of people. When you configure a list for announcements only, you need a password in order to post messages. Since you determine who knows the password, you determine who can post messages to the list. You can limit posting privileges to one individual, or several people in your organization.

The main advantage of an announcement-only list is that the owner has complete control of the content and the frequency of postings. This makes it a good choice if you want to distribute electronic action alerts, press releases, or newsletters. The main disadvantage is that subscribers cannot just hit "reply" to comment to the whole list about something that was posted.

If you're using list software, you can configure the list so that readers can't reply at all, or so that replies go back to the list's owner.

Moderated email lists

A moderated email list allows for controlled two-way communication. Anyone who subscribes to a moderated list can post a message to the list, but the message is routed to the list owner, who gets to decide whether or not to post it.

This gives the list owner nearly as much control over the content as the owner of an announcement-only list.

The main advantage of a moderated list is that the moderator can make sure that comments from readers are relevant to the purpose of the list. The main disadvantage is that you'll have to read every reply you get from list subscribers in order to decide whether or not to post them. This can be time-consuming if the list is very active. Also, if you decide not to post someone's comment you may take some heat from the subscriber whose post is rejected. You can attempt to minimize such criticism by having a clearly articulated statement describing the purpose of the list.

Unmoderated email lists

An unmoderated list allows for open communication among all subscribers. Anyone who subscribes to an unmoderated list can post a message to the list for everyone else to see. This configuration gives your subscribers the most freedom to communicate. But it also gives you as the list owner the least amount of control over the content.

The main advantage of an unmoderated list is low maintenance for the list owner. If subscription is automatic, rather than by approval, you will be able to manage the list with minimal effort.

Open subscription process (anyone can participate)

An open subscription list allows anyone who is interested to subscribe. You won't have to approve any new subscribers. If you are configuring an "announcement only" list or a "moderated" list, as described above, you may want an open subscription process to avoid having to approve each new subscriber.

Membership-only lists (subscription approval, password-protected Web sites)

When you set up a list to require subscription approval, all subscription requests are forwarded to you, or whoever you've designated as the list owner. If you want to allow the subscription, you'll reply to the message with the list password. If you don't want to allow it, you won't need to do anything.

If you set up a list with your own email software, you are in fact setting up a list that requires approval since you're the only one who can add new email addresses to your address book.

How should your organization operate its mailing list? Should it be announcement-only? Is a moderator necessary? What subscription process would be better? Consider your organization's needs and goals before deciding.

Signature files

A signature file (also known as sig file) at the end of an email message is an excellent way to provide contact information. If you include a complete URL, the signature file will also serve as a hyperlink to your Web site. Here is an example of a very basic signature file:

===
=======================

<<NetAction>>

Audrie Krause, Executive Director
E-MAIL: audrie@netaction.org
601 Van Ness Ave., No. 631
San Francisco, CA 94102
TELEPHONE: (415) 775-8674 FAX: (415) 673-3813
* * * WEB: http://www.netaction.org * * *

==

It's also possible to include a sentence or two in the signature file that promotes an event or action that your organization is involved in. Here is an example of a signature file that contains a message:

==

THE SUITCASE CLINIC
A student-run non-profit organization providing free services
for the homeless and low-income communities.

570 University Hall, Berkeley, CA 94704
(510) 643-6786

website: http://socrates.berkeley.edu/~suitcase/
e-mail: suitcase@socrates.berkeley.edu

==

Most email programs allow the user to set up a signature file that will automatically be tacked onto the end of every email message. If the signature file is the default, your browser should have a menu choice that lets you send a message without the signature in the event you don't want to include the identifying information. Some browsers also allow the user to set up an alternate signature so that you can include organizational contact information for your activist messages, and personal information for your personal correspondence.

[Excerpted from "The Virtual Activist" http://www.netaction.org/training/v-training.html with modifications by the editor.]

* * *

Independent Media

The A-Infos News Service http://www.ainfos.ca

A multi-lingual news service by, for, and about anarchists.

We have set ourselves a task. To be the people's scribe. On the other side of history, hirstory has begun. And it will have new authors. It kicks. And so do we. In the struggle for a free society, we distribute news and articles in several languages, covering a wide range of areas. These include workplace, environmental and anti-imperialist struggles as well as the fight against racism, sexism and homophobia.

Indymedia http://www.indymedia.org

The Independent Media Center is a network of collectively run media outlets for the creation of radical, accurate, and passionate tellings of the truth. We work out of a love and inspiration for people who continue to work for a better world, despite corporate media's distortions and unwillingness to cover the efforts to free humanity.

The Independent Media Center (www.indymedia.org), was established by various independent and alternative media organizations and activists for the purpose of providing grassroots coverage of the World Trade Organization (WTO) protests in Seattle last November. The center acted as a clearinghouse of information for journalists, and provided up-to-the-minute reports, photos, audio and video footage through its web site. Using the collected footage, the Seattle Independent Media Center (seattle.indymedia.org) produced a series of five documentaries, uplinked every day to satellite and distributed throughout the United States to public access stations.

The center also produced its own newspaper, distributed throughout Seattle and to other cities via the internet, as well as hundreds of audio segments, transmitted through the web and Studio X, a 24-hour micro and internet radio station based in Seattle. The site, which uses a democratic open-publishing system, has since then logged more than 2 million hits, and was featured on America Online, Yahoo, CNN, BBC Online, and numerous other sites. Through a decentralized and autonomous network, hundreds of media activists have since setup independent media centers in London, Canada, Mexico City, Prague, Belgium, France, and Italy, with more to come.

MicroRadio.Net http://www.microradio.net

EMPOWERMENT or Smashing the Corporate Media Blockade
Contact: info@microradio.net

WHO: Who is the Radio in MicroRadio? YOU ARE! Get MicroPowered NOW!
WHAT: Download and BROADCAST MP3 audio STREAMED to you on demand LIVE or from the ARCHIVE to your NEIGHBORS in your COMMUNITY somewhere on the FM DIAL. Become a tiny beacon of hope in your hometown with FOUR watts of MicroRadio FM broadcast power. Check out the TOOLBOX for the resources you need.

WHERE: MicroRadio.NET and your home town.
WHY: LIFE is not a SPECTATOR SPORT!
WHEN: NOW you can JOIN the MOSQUITO FLEET of DEDICATED DOWNLOADERS and add your WATTAGE to the cause!

ELEMENTS: HARNESS your personal initiative. ASSEMBLE your MicroTransmitter BROADCAST breaking events in LIVE STREAMING MP3 from Independent STUDIOS or CONVERGENCE centers LOCATED around the GLOBAL VISION. Check out the EBS Calendar for more information about upcoming ECBs brought to you by the Emergency Broadcasters Bloc and fellow freedom fighters.

Liberation Theory 101: Seize the the technology that oppresses you. Use it to liberate yourself and others. Keep it small, keep it real, move fast, stay in touch. Don't HATE the Mega-Media, BECOME the *Micro*Media. Give your community its own voice.

GOALS: EXTEND the realtime MicroRadio Network to YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD FM DIAL, and help SMASH the corporate media blockade. BECOME MicroRadio empowered. Cross the DIGITAL DIVIDE and SEIZE your slot on the FM dial. NETWORK with others already engaged. SPREAD the global Revolution and BEGIN your local EVOLUTION!

LIFE IS NOT A SPECTATOR SPORT.
Get off your ass, and start broadcasting.
THE REVOLUTION NEEDS YOU.

Webcasting

ShoutCast Handbook
by Richard with additions by Gretchen

[Software mentioned in these instructions can be obtained from http://www.microradio.net]

Step 1

Downloading ShoutPak: Create a new folder on your desktop, titled "ShoutPak." Download the Shoutpak and save to this folder. You will need to unzip this file, extract it to the "ShoutPak" folder.

What you'll get in this .zip file:

mp3-09f.exe - the installer for Fraunhofer's mp3 compressor.

dsp150b2.exe - shoutcast source plugin for winamp, gotta install into the winamp folder. There is a later version at winamp.com, try it if you're feeling adventuresome.

winamp265_lite.exe - winamp installer.
advdemo.exe - video tutorial of the elusive "advanced mode." It's actually pretty helpful, if you don't already know how to use adv mode.

What you need to download:

Shoutcast Server (you can download the latest Shoutcast Server at http://www.shoutcast.com/). Also save this file in the ShoutPak folder.

Installation:

MP3 Compressor - double click on: mp3-09f.exe. After installing the mp3 compressor, you need to adjust your settings in the control panel. Click on Sounds and Multimedia settings in the Control Panel on your desktop. Under the "Hardware" tab, then double click on "Audio Codecs." Under the "Properties" tab of the new window, select the "Fraunhofer IIS MPEG Layer-3 Codecs" and prioritize this codecs by changing the setting under "Properties."

Winamp - Double click on: winamp265_lite.exe to install winamp. Note the Winamp installation number: XXXXXXXX.

Shoutcast Source Plug-in - Next, install dsp150b2.exe in the "Winamp" folder (browse in your program folder). Click here to read the Shoutcast Source instructions provided by Winamp, read at your own risk.

Shoutcast Server - You'll also need to download the latest Shoutcast Server at http://www.shoutcast.com. Next, double click on the shoutcast-1-8-0-windows.exe file (current file name at time of this writing) and install. Restart Winamp if you had it running at the time.

Now you're ready to configure the broadcasting software.

Step 2

After you start Winamp, click on the left side of the border of Winamp, this usually brings up a small menu, on which an option called "Options" can be found. Click "Options" to bring up another menu on which will be ANOTHER option called "Preferences". Click "Preferences". This will bring up a window that has a tree of functions. The one you want to click on is the one labeled "DSP/Effect". This will change the contents of the section to the right to a list of Plugins that match the category.

In there should be the Plugin you just installed. It will most likely be labeled "SHOUTcast Source for Winamp" with a version number (currently v1.5.0b2 at the time of this writing). Click on this, and find at the bottom of window a small button called "Configure", now click THAT. YET ANOTHER window should pop up. It will have two check boxes at the top.

One will say next to it: "Enable low-pass filtering" (recommended). I suggest you do this. In other words check the box by clicking it. If you intend to broadcast the audio coming out of your webradio studio or community netcasting facility, then enable "advanced recording mode" (check the second box). You should do this if you are planning to broadcast more than MP3s (i.e. the output from you mixer by running a line out of the board into the soundcard on your computer). Depending upon where you plugged the patch cord into your soundcard, select "Line In" or "Microphone". At the very bottom is another checkbox with a big button that will have a path to somewhere on your hard drive (Usually it will say C:\). I suggest ignoring it, and make sure it is NOT checked.

At this point you may now click the "OK" button. Click the "Close" button on the "Winamp "preferences" window. Look in your system tray (usually on your windows toolbar at the bottom of the screen and to the right unless it's been fiddled with.) There should be a new icon there. Allowing the mouse cursor to hover over it should cause a hint box to come up saying something like: "SHOUTcast source:0 bytes sent." Double click this icon to bring up YET ANOTHER window.

This window will be labeled: "SHOUTcast source" (go figure). There will be two buttons labeled "Edit". Next to the top one it will usually say "Server:localhost:8000". Ironically enough, this doesn't really need to be changed. Although some may find better results if you put in your actual IP# here. Under that however, is another button labeled "Edit", and next to that it will say something like "Format:MP3 @ <some number in kbps> <some number in kHZ> You will want to click this edit button to change this to a better value. Doing so will bring up a window labeled: "Format selection (MPEG layer-3 only)." There will be an option that will initially say "[untitled]" under "Name:". Ignore it.

There will be another area labeled: "Format:" which will have a drop-down list that should say "MPEG Layer-3", if it doesn't say this, then change it to say this. Under that, is an area called "Attributes:", and another drop-down box. You want to change this to something appropriate for your circumstances. The first value, which will be some number and kBits/s is the rate of speed you are transmitting data, depending on your connection, you will want something that your bandwidth can handle. Using a normal DSL connection, you should be able to use 24 kBit/s. The next one, is some number in Hz. As a rule of thumb, the higher this number, the greater the quality of sound, but greater the drain on your connection. Continuing to follow the Rule-of-Thumb, somewhere around 24 kBit/s, 22,050 Hz Mono should be fine for a DSL (and is recommended). As a comparison, CD sound quality is around 44000 Hz, while a telephone would be around 10,000 Hz or so (REALLY wild guess here). And of course, Stereo or mono is your decision, bear in mind that Stereo being TWO channels of sound (as opposed to MONO which is only one) takes yet more bandwidth. But again, a DSL should be able to handle this (but folks trying to download a stereo stream will have a bad connection -- lots of dropouts, pauses, etc.).

After messing with the settings to your liking, press OK. You'll notice on the window, there is a field labeled: "Song Title" with a checkbox next to it that says "Auto", so does the "URL" field. Both are usually checked by default, and I recommend you keep it that way.

Now for "Server control". This section is pretty self-explanatory. The auto-reconnect box and 30 seconds means that, if you ever lose your connection, it will automatically reconnect in 30 seconds. If you uncheck the box, you have to press the connect button yourself if that happens. Changing the 30 to whatever, will be how long it waits before trying to reconnect all by itself.

"Advanced Mode". Most of the stuff here you won't be using, but if you're setting up a broadcasting studio by patching the mixer board into your soundcard you need to adjust the volume under this tab. But do this later.

OK. We're now done with step 1.

Step 3

Configuring the DNAS Server. Ok. If you installed everything normally, then on your start menu, you should have a folder that is named "SHOUTcast DNAS". Click here (Usually it slides out when I let the mouse hover over it), and choose "SHOUTcast DNAS (GUI)".

This should bring up a new window called: "Nullsoft SHOUTcast Server Monitor". At the top of the window among the menu options, should be one called "Edit config", click this. It should bring up notepad, and if you have a sound card, you'll probably hear a "DING". In the notepad window that just came up, there are a few things to modify.

NOTE: To insure that any changes you make take effect, you need to have the ';' deleted from the beginning of the line, if there is one.

****
Required Stuff
****

MaxUser=32 (This is explained in the file. Change it as you will, but this number will not actually represent the number of users, rather the number of repeaters or mirrors that you will be setting up later).

Password=<whatever> (Again, explained fully, you'll see a couple of these, make sure you name them all the same so you don't lose track).

PortBase=8000 (There's no need to change this, everything else we'll be setting up in the instructions will use this setting).

For those things that are already explained, or don't need changing, I'll just breeze through them here.

****
Network configuration
****

SrcIP=ANY
DestIP=ANY
Yport=80

****
Server configuration
****

AdminPassword=<whatever> (Remember to make this something you'll remember, or make sure it's the same one you use for your Live365 server).

That should work fine for now (click here for a sample of what the notepad window should look like after you've tweaked the code), all the other settings don't need to be altered right now, and you can fiddle with them later if you decide you wish to further customize. Make sure you save, then exit notepad. Find the SHOUTcast DNAS window, and press "Kill server". Then start it again (So it starts using the new settings).

Step 4

Here is the part where I tell you how to make it all happen. The exact process here will vary depending on who your provider of broadcast service is. In this case, I'll use Live365 as an example ('Cause that's what I used to set mine up while trying to figure this all out).

You need to go to www.live365.com to create a member profile. At Live 365's home page, select the broadcast link (at the top and/or bottom of the page). Then click on "sign up now" on the right hand side of the broadcast page under "Log in:". Note you member name and password. Wait for the e-mail they will send you with a link. When you get the e-mail, activate you account by following the link in the email they send you to set up your profile.

NOTE: If you plan to set-up multiple relays at Live365 (each relay you set-up gives you the capacity to carry 365 listeners), you will need to use a new email address for each member profile you create.

Click on "Create your own station." Then click "Member Profile," top of right hand column. Now, click on "sign up now," under Register to Broadcast. Select Relay Broadcast and fill-in your IP number/port number, then click "next".

If you don't have know what your IP number is, there's an easy way to find out. Click the Start button on the Windows toolbar, choose RUN. In the command field, type: winipcfg. Press enter. This should bring up a window that tells you your IP address.

This IP Address is the number of your machine. If the winipcfg window doesn't come up when you do this (and I HATE it when the path is messed with in windows), there is another way to get to it. In the Run box, type this instead:c:\windows\winipcfg.exe. If this doesn't work, then someone obviously messed with the machine in a way that is heinous. There are various utilities on the net for finding your IP number. One which I use is called "Internet Maniac" which has other nifty tools as well. The Port number field on the Live365 page should be set to 8000 (we set this earlier on everything else).

After you click "next", you should go to the "Broadcast page" to get the IP number of the relay broadcaster (linked at the top of the page). MAKE A NOTE OF IT YOU NEED THAT! You need the IP relay number for the .pls file that you will be link on your web site.

Now, at this point your SHOUTcast DNAS server (GUI) should be registering activity, if you left your max users to 32, then you should have 1/32 users. This tells you that you have the Live365 server listening to you. On occasion, this doesn't always happen immediately.

You may have to stop everything, close all the programs we've gone over, REBOOT, and start them up again. Though the settings should be fine. On occasion you may also discover that the Live365 server isn't responding/broadcasting etc. There is an option to resolve this on the Live365 website. Log in, click Broadcaster controls, look down below and find a button called "Reset Broadcast" click this and try again.

If that doesn't work, then something funky is going on that will require actual personal attention.

Now all you need is the IP# and port of the Live365 server to tell people to go to listen.

Step 5

To set up a playlist (.pls) file so that listeners can tune into your stream, open winamp on the monitoring computer. Click on the left side of the border of Winamp and select "Playlist Editor." You should see a gray tab in the bottom left, "ADD," click here. If the playlist is minimized, you may have to click on the dot, net to the ‘X’ to maximize it. Once maximized, you will see "ADD" and other tabs.

Once you click the ADD tab, you need to select "ADD URL," this is where you type in the Live 365 relay IP. You should type something that looks like this: http://167.90.143.150:15879. You can keep adding relay IPs by repeating the above steps (select, ADD, then ADD URL, etc.).

Once you've loaded all you relay IPs, select "LIST OPTS" on the bottom right-hand corner of the Playlist Editor. Then click on "SAVE LIST," type in a file name and select type as "PLS Playlist". Make sure you note what folder your saving the .pls file in. This playlist now needs to be linked your website. Once you upload the file and chmode, listeners and broadcasters will be able to "click to listen" and the .pls file will automatically open in winamp and load the relay IPs.

HAPPY BROADCASTING:)

Icecast Handbook
by Mark Heckmann

[Software mentioned in these instructions can be obtained from http://www.microradio.net]

Lame MP3 Encoder

Installing Lame is a very straightforward process. We don't actually have to use the lame program itself directly for this setup as Liveice will run lame for us.

Normally when installing software, you want to get the latest stable version. However, Lame is a little different since they don't often release stable versions and the beta versions tend be stable and are significantly faster than the stable version. This is the case with the latest beta, 3.89, against the latest stable release, 3.70. There are several ways you can install Lame, if you are running an RPM based system like RedHat or Mandrake, I recommend downloading an rpm and installing that. You can get a recent lame rpm for an intel PC running RedHat 7.x or Mandrake 7.x and above from http://people.hbe.ca/~heckmann/streaming-howto/RPMS.

If you are running an older version of redhat or a non-intel based platform (like a PPC apple computer), you can get the src rpm and rebuild it (as the root user):

[root@cruch SRPMS]# rpm --rebuild lame-3.88beta-1.src.rpm

It will rebuild the binary rpm for you and place it under the /usr/src/redhat/RPMS/i386/ directory. Wether or not you rebuilt it from source, you can install it by doing:

```
[root@cruch i386]# rpm -ivh lame-3.88beta-1.i386.rpm
```

Lame has now been installed.

Regardless of what distribution you are running, or if you are running FreeBSD, you can always install lame from the source tar package (assuming it lies in my home directory):

```
heckmann@berg:[/Net/home/t/heckmann ]tar -xzvf lame3.88beta.tar.gz
.....
heckmann@berg:[/Net/home/t/heckmann ]cd lame-3.88
heckmann@berg:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/lame-3.88 ]./configure
.....
heckmann@berg:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/lame-3.88 ]make
.....
heckmann@berg:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/lame-3.88 ]su
Password:
[root@berg lame-3.88]# make install
.....
```

LAME should now be installed in /usr/local/bin. If you are using FreeBSD, there might be a lame port, read the FreeBSD docs for more info on this.

Icecast

You can get an rpm from http://www.icecast.org. To install it:

```
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann ]su
Password:
[root@django heckmann]# rpm -Uvh icecast-1.3.10-1.i386.rpm

Preparing...
###########################################
[100%]
1:icecast
###########################################
[100%]
```

or if you prefer, you can build it from source:

```
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann ]tar -xzvf icecast-1.3.10.tar.gz

icecast-1.3.10/
icecast-1.3.10/Makefile.in
icecast-1.3.10/README
....
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann ]cd icecast-1.3.10

heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast-1.3.10 ]./configure --enable-fsstd

creating cache ./config.cache
Building icecast-1.3.10...
checking for a BSD compatible install... /usr/bin/install -c
.....
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast-1.3.10 ]make
```

```
make all-recursive
make[1]: Entering directory
`/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast-1.3.10'
.....
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast-1.3.10
]su

Password:
[root@django icecast-1.3.10]# make install
Making install in src
.....
```

Icecast is now installed. Now it's time to configure it. We recommend running icecast as a non-root user as well as putting the icecast config and log files in that users home directory:

```
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann ]mkdir ˜/icecast

heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann ]cd ˜/icecast

heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast ]cp
/etc/icecast/icecast.conf .

heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast ]cp
/etc/icecast/*.aut .
```

Edit the icecast conf file:

```
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast ]pico
icecast.conf
```

It's very well commented (lines that start with the "#" character are comments), so you can follow those instructions, but here' s a brief overview of what you'll need to change:

Modify encoder_password, admin_password, and oper_password.

Change server_name to your server's hostname

Change logdir to the icecast directory in your home. For me that would look like:

/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast

Set use_meta_data to 1. you might need this later. Ignore the comments as it works well with recent icecast versions.

You can now start icecast by doing:

heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast]/usr/sbin/icecast -c ~/icecast/icecast.conf -b

Icecast Version 1.3.10 Initializing...
Icecast comes with NO WARRANTY, to the extent permitted by law.
You may redistribute copies of Icecast under the terms of the
GNU General Public License.
For more information about these matters, see the file named COPYING.
Starting thread engine...
[17/May/2001:15:38:56] Icecast Version 1.3.10 Starting..
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann/icecast]

Congratulations, icecast is now installed and running.

For some more in depth icecast documentation, you can read /usr/doc/icecast-1.3.10/manual.html.

We'll discuss logging into icecast in admin mode later on.

Liveice

Ok, this is the most important part as liveice is what does all the work, so pay attention.

Grab liveice from http://star.arm.ac.uk/~spm/software/liveice.html.

compile and install it:

```
[raneyda@ip029-55 raneyda]$ tar zxvf ~/liveice.tar.gz

[raneyda@ip029-55 raneyda]$ cd liveice
cd liveice [raneyda@ip029-55 liveice]$ ./configure

[raneyda@ip029-55 liveice]$ make
[raneyda@ip029-55 liveice]$ su
[root@ip029-55 liveice]$ install -c ./liveice /usr/bin/liveice; install -c ./liveiceconfigure.tk /usr/bin/liveiceconfigure.tk
```

Now your done...All the software is compiled and installed. The only thing left to do to have a working liveice system is the configuration. To do this you can either use included tk configuration tool or copy ours. To run the Tk configuration tool:

```
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann
]liveiceconfigure.tk
```

Here's what the produced liveice.cfg looks like:

```
# liveice configuration file
# Automatically generated
SERVER localhost
PORT 8000
NAME LiveIce Radio
GENRE Live
URL http://www.icecast.org
PUBLIC 0
X_AUDIOCAST_LOGIN
PASSWORD xxxxxxx
SAMPLE_RATE 22050
MONO
SOUNDCARD
HALF_DUPLEX
USE_LAME3 /usr/bin/lame
BITRATE 24000
VBR_QUALITY 1
NO_MIXER
PLAYLIST playlist
DECODER_COMMAND mpg123
MIX_CONTROL_MANUAL
CONTROL_FILE mix_command
TRACK_LOGFILE track.log
```

The most important option here is SERVER, as you need to specify the DNS hostname or IP address of the server you are going to use. For more information on editing the liveice.cfg file, read the README.liveice file that comes with the liveice package (tarball) as well as the documentation on the web at http://star.arm.ac.uk/~spm/software/liveice_usage.html.

Liveice uses the special /dev/dsp underneath the works so to speak to get the audio signal from the soundcard. to If you are running RedHat or Mandrake the permissions of this special file should already be set to the currently logged in user. However, if your not running either one of these distributions, or plan to start liveice remotely, you might want change the ownership of the /dev/dsp file to be the same as the user that is running liveice.

[root@django icecast]# chown nameofyourliveiceuser /dev/dsp

Liveice is a little rough around the edges and one of the things that can be a little confusing is the way it reads the liveice.cfg configuration file. By default it checks to see if there is as a file named liveice.cfg in the current directory. If there is it loads that file, if not, you have to use "-F" option to specify a config. file to use (e.g liveice -F alternate_liveice.cfg). The problem is that if you have a file called liveice.cfg in the current working directory and you use the -F flag (option), liveice will use _both_ files! Just be careful.

OK start liveice:

heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann]liveice

That's it! Use an MP3 player on a different machine to listen to the stream, the URL or location usually is
http://servername.domain.org:8000/.

Now you might want to send out a high quality and a low quality stream, to do this use the ENCODER_STREAM_SET option in the liveice.cfg file:

```
# liveice configuration file
# Automatically generated
NAME LiveIce Radio
GENRE Live
URL http://www.icecast.org
PUBLIC 0
X_AUDIOCAST_LOGIN
MONO
SOUNDCARD
HALF_DUPLEX
USE_LAME3 /usr/bin/lame
VBR_QUALITY 1
NO_MIXER
PLAYLIST playlist
DECODER_COMMAND mpg123
MIX_CONTROL_MANUAL
CONTROL_FILE mix_command
TRACK_LOGFILE track.log

ENCODER_STREAM_SET 0
SERVER localhost
PORT 8000
PASSWORD hackme
BITRATE 24000
MONO
SAMPLE_RATE 22050
MOUNTPOINT /low

ENCODER_STREAM_SET 1
SERVER localhost
PORT 8000
PASSWORD hackme
BITRATE 64000
```

MONO
SAMPLE_RATE 44100
MOUNTPOINT /high

Note the "MONTPOINT" option, this allows us to send to streams to the same icecast server. Also, the "ENCODER_STREAM_SET" allows us to send streams to different servers. It does however run another instance of lame for every stream set so watch your CPU usage, or use relays at the icecast (server) level.

One thing to consider here is that if you are sending to different servers is that liveice is a little rough around the edges and if the connection is lost with one of the servers, the whole stream will go down.

(Re)playing MP3's

If you want to play MP3's during your broadcast, the easiest thing to do, would be to use a second computer with an MP3 player and send it's output to your mixing board, you can then easily and seamlessly send it to the encoder box.

A note about levels

While your streaming, it's a good idea to keep an eye on the liveice levels to make sure that they don't "clip". You want to avoid distortion as it'll sound like crap. Another thing to do would be to monitor your stream. Meaning you should actually listen to the live stream using an MP3 player to check for distortion or dropouts.

Using the icecast ADMIN console

Using the console should apply wether or not you run your own icecast server you may have to use it.:

heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann]telnet django.hbesoftware.com 8000

Trying 192.168.1.165...
Connected to django.hbesoftware.com.
Escape character is '^]'.
ADMIN hackme

OK
-> sources
Listing sources
[Id: 39] [Sock: 9] [Time of connect: 17/May/2001:18:21:17] [IP: 127.0.0.1] [Host: localhost.localdomain] State: 1] [Type: encoder] [Proto: x-audiocast] [Clients: 0] [Dumpfile/fd: (null)/-1] [Priority: 0] [Song Title:] Song URL: http://yp.icecast.org] [Stream Message: (null)] [Song Length: -1 bytes] [Stream Name: LiveIce Radio] [Stream Genre: Live] [Stream Bitrate: 32] [Stream URL: http://www.icecast.org] [Mountpoint: /low] [Description: LiveIce] [MBytes read: 1] [MBytes written: 0] [Client connections: 0] [Connected for: 4 minutes and 52 seconds]
[Id: 40] [Sock: 12] [Time of connect: 17/May/2001:18:21:17] [IP: 127.0.0.1] [Host: localhost.localdomain] [State: 1] [Type: encoder] [Proto: x-audiocast] [Clients: 0] [Dumpfile/fd: (null)/-1] [Priority: 0] [Song Title:] [Song URL: http://yp.icecast.org] [Stream Message: (null)] [Song Length: -1 bytes] [Stream Name: LiveIce Radio] [Stream Genre: Live] [Stream Bitrate: 64] [Stream URL: http://www.icecast.org] [Mountpoint: /high] [Description: LiveIce] [MBytes read: 2] [MBytes written:

0] [Client connections: 0] [Connected for: 4 minutes and 52 seconds]
End of source listing (2 listed)
> quit
Uh, ok, bye!
Connection closed by foreign host.
heckmann@django:[/Net/home/t/heckmann]

Note that after the ADMIN password command is put in you have to hit enter twice. Read the icecast documentation to learn about what you can do with it. It is entirely possible that you won't have access to the console.

Mainstream Press Relations

How to Write Effective Press Releases

There are very specific formats for writing press releases and if you want to improve the odds that your press releases will be read, you must follow them. Furthermore, since the standard press release format is designed to efficiently transmit information, you have every incentive to use the proper format to get your job done well.

Getting Started. To start, you will need to develop press release letterhead. Although styles vary, a typical press release contains the name of the organization, its address and its phone number on the top left and the words "News," "Press Release," or "Media Release" on the top right. Typically, press release letterhead is on legal size paper (8 1/2" x 14"), although standard letter size (8 1/2" x 11") is also considered appropriate.

You'll also need a #10 (standard business size) carrier envelope that matches your press release letterhead in style, ink color and paper color. It is permissible to use larger envelopes if your release is to be accompanied by other items too large for a #10 envelope, such as photographs, sample copies of books, etc.

At the top of your releases, you should type "For Release: Immediate" or "For Release: Date." If you do not want journalists to use the information until a certain time, type "Embargoed Until (Date and Time)" after the "For Release." On the right, directly across from the "For Release" information, you should type "Contact:" and then the name or names of the person(s) who will be available to answer questions from the media. The individuals' phone numbers should be included under their names.

The Slug. The first bit of text in a press release is called the slug. This refers to the title, or headline, on the release. The slug should very briefly summarize the topic of the release and, if at all possible, utilize action verbs to sound as interesting and as newsworthy as possible.

The Inverted Triangle. A good press release follows what is known as the inverted triangle. The inverted triangle means that information should begin with the most important information. The next paragraph should contain slightly less important information, and so on, until the very last bit of information in the release is the least important. If you have written a release correctly, it should be possible to cut off the bottom half of the release and still provide journalists with sufficient information.

The inverted triangle format is important because journalists receive large numbers of press releases each day. Time constraints may force them to read only the beginning of a release before deciding if they will use the material or throw the release away. It is therefore in your interest to present information in an efficient and straight forward manner so that journalists can access the information quickly.

The Lead. The lead is the first sentence or paragraph of a press release. It should contain what is known as the five w's: who, what, where, when and why. These five w's give journalists what they need to know in order to pursue your story. Memorize them and make sure they appear in your lead.

Style. Keep the release short and succinct. A press release should rarely go over one page. Always type a release and use wide margins. It is common for releases to be typed double-spaced to allow journalists to take notes on the release itself. If you don't choose to do so, at least leave space between paragraphs. Paragraphs and sentences should be kept short. Use exact dates whenever possible (for example, "Monday, June 5" or even "June 5" is more informative than "next Monday.") When using numbers in text, spell out numbers one through ten. For all other numbers use numerals.

Objectivity. Press releases are designed to transmit facts. Opinions should not be included unless they are clearly identified as such. One way to convey opinion is by including a quote from someone in your group. Make certain that the quote is clearly attributed.

Closing Symbols. At the end of a release, you must indicate to journalists that the release is over. There are two commonly-accepted symbols that indicate this. The first is "-30-" and the second "###". Use either at the end of your release, placing whichever you choose in the lower center of the page. In the rare instances that your release goes over one page, type "MORE" at the bottom of any page that is not your last page. Again, this should be centered.

[From an unattributed source.]
* * *

E-Mail Press Releases

Distribute email press releases in plain ASCII text.

Draft your press release as you would any other email message, using an email software program. Never send press releases as attachments to email, or attach other documents to email press releases. If you need to prepare a paper copy of the press release, copy and paste the ASCII text into a word processing document after the release is written in the email program.

Keep the text brief and focused.

An electronic press release should follow the same "pyramid" format as any other press release. Start with the most important information (and remember the five "W's" - who, what, where, when and why). Use short paragraphs and keep it brief.

Write a subject line that's compelling or provocative.

Keep in mind that the subject line is the first thing reporters will see when they download your release. Never email a press release (or any other message) with a blank subject line.

Include your electronic contact information.

Remember to include your email address and Web site URL in addition to your phone and fax number, and address. Put all your contact information at the top of the press release.

Use hyper-links where appropriate.

If there is additional information available on your Web site -- such as a white paper or an event announcement -- include a hyper-link so reporters can click right to it. Online publications will often include these links in their stories, making this an effective way to direct visitors to your Web site.

Send a test message before distributing your press release.

Always send a copy of the press release to yourself or to a colleague before distributing it. Check the format to make sure there are no broken lines of text, and check for any mistyped Web URLs by testing them to make sure they work.

Avoid disclosing the recipients' email addresses.

Always type the recipients' addresses in the "Bcc" field of your email message header, rather than in the "To" or "Cc" field.

Post your organization's media contact information on the home page of your Web site. Be sure to keep the contact information up-to-date, and include information on how reporters can be added to your mailing list.

Treat email media inquiries the same as phone inquiries.

Always respond just as promptly to email media inquiries as you would to phone calls. Reporters who work for online publications are much more likely to contact you by email than by phone. If you're responsible for answering media inquiries, check your email frequently throughout the day.

Set up an online archive for your media communications.

Set aside an area of your Web site where reporters can locate past press releases. (If you publish a newsletter in electronic form, maintain an online archive of past issues, as well.)

Post press releases only to appropriate lists, news groups, and publications.

If you plan to post your press release to any email discussion lists, news groups or online publications, make sure the topic of your release is appropriate content for the list or Web site. If your press release announces a new report on air pollution, it would not be appropriate content for a forum for race car enthusiasts, for example.

Collect email addresses from your media contacts.

If you've been distributing your press releases by fax or postal mail, ask your media contacts if you can switch to email distribution. Major newspapers frequently have separate staffs for their online versions, so you'll need to include those contacts on your list, too. There are also media directories and news services specifically for online publications that may be appropriate to add to your media list.

[Excerpted from "The Virtual Activist" http://www.netaction.org/training/v-training.html with modifications by the editor.]

* * *

What makes a press release effective

News, of course, is meant to be all about novelty, so emphasize what's new about your action. This shouldn't be difficult as the "movement" is so creative and innovative: people are always coming up with exciting new approaches, so all you have to do is make sure the press hears about them.

Take the Birmingham Northern Relief Road protest, for example. A headline like "Protesters occupy trees along route of new road" will consign a press release straight to the bin, as most journalists will imagine they've heard it all before. But "World's longest sermon threatens to stop new road" (telling the story of the vicar who has discovered that it's illegal to interrupt a priest during his sermon, and intends to preach continually in front of the threatened trees) will make them sit up and wonder what it's all about.

If you want to mention the tree-sit, you can do so further on in the text.

There might also be a new political aspect of the story you can use to attract the journalists' attention to your protest: "New road could destroy region's economy, experts say" would, for most journalists, be counter-intuitive and interesting (which shows how much they've been paying attention).

If the action is in a remote location and you're organizing transport to get there, say so in the press release, pointing out that journalists are welcome to join you on the coach. Many reporters are so lazy that they won't bother turning up unless everything's laid on for them.

When to send press releases

The most critical press release is the one that goes out about two days before the event. Without it, you won't get much coverage, if any at all. But it's a good idea to put one out much earlier than that as well - about ten days prior to the event - so that when the journalists get the second one they should be ready to respond to it.

It's also important to send out a third one the moment the action begins, telling them you've succeeded in stopping work on the bypass/locking Group 4 in their offices etc.

If it's a one day action and your press person has still got the energy and resources, it's no bad thing to send out a fourth press release saying how it all went. A journalist's interest is pretty unpredictable, and
could be stimulated at any time.

If the action lasts longer than one day, send out a new press release every day, as long as you've got something to say. Once the event's in the press already, there'll be plenty of opportunities for follow-ups. This is the time when you can sometimes get them to cover the issue you're trying to highlight, rather than simply the event.

Who to send press releases to

The secret of all successful press releasing is getting them to the right people - so find out who the right people are. Make a list of:

Media outlets you want to reach

Individual journalists who seem to be interested in/sympathetic to the cause

The more you can reach the better, of course, but, unless you're just aiming at the local press, realistically you want to try to press release at least forty places. If it's a national action and you want national publicity, they must include the national media.

NOTE: You should adapt the tone and contents of your press release to the media you're trying to reach. "Road protesters come to town X" might be of interest to the local newspaper, but to get to the nationals you'd need something more like "New front opens in road war".

How to send press releases

Faxing is still the best way to send them, and a fax modem is invaluable. Some journalists are beginning to emerge from the Neolithic, so they might be contacted by email.

Don't use snail mail: it invariably gets lost/disregarded/placed on the bottom of the pile.

To get fax numbers, simply phone the papers, TV and radio stations in question and ask for the fax number of the Newsdesk. If you also want to send your press releases to named journalists at the same organization, it's best to get their fax numbers off them: reception will often give you the wrong fax number, or one that's been out of date for months. Keep all the fax numbers you get for future reference. Best of all, load them permanently into your computer, so, once you've decided who should get what, your fax modem can contact them automatically.

Following up

One thing of which you can be absolutely certain is that something will get lost in the newsrooms you're targeting: either your press release, the journalist's concentration or the essence of the story. This means you MUST follow it up with a phone call. Just a quick one will do. Ask: Did you get it? Will you be covering the action? Do you need any more information?

They're likely to be rude, gruff and unhelpful. But don't be put off - they're paid to be like that. Make sure you're ready, if need be, to summarize the story in one or two sentences; the first question the journalist will ask is "wot's it all about then?", and her/his attention will wander if you spend more than ten seconds telling them. However rude they are, never fail to be polite and charming: at the very least, you'll put them to shame.

How to Deal With Journalists who Come to your Action

The whole media-exploitation process is about news management, and this is just as much the case once journalists get to the action as it is when you're trying to attract them. You've got to give the best possible account of what you're doing, and provide the clearest possible explanation of why you're doing it. This means:

A. Make sure the right people talk to the journalists. Different people do different things best. Some are brilliant at building treehouses or digging shit pits, but not much good at being charming to the running dogs of the counter-revolution. Some people will have just dropped a tab of acid or have last night's vomit stuck in their hair. This won't endear them to journalists, who, in most cases, will be having enough trouble crossing the cultural divide as it is.

Talking to the press is something of an art form: you must be charming, persuasive and well-briefed. Best of all, you'll have practiced, by persuading your friends to pretend to be hostile reporters.

B. Be careful, but don't come across as suspicious. Some of them will be there to help you, others will be there to get you. Sometimes the ones out to get you will pretend to be out to help you. The only real safeguards are: to know who they all are. Ask them who they are and who they work for. Some journalists are notorious for dissing the movement. You should find out who the sketchy ones are before the action, so you'll know to be ultra-careful if they turn up; not to say anything stupid or risky; be friendly towards them, whoever they are. Bite your lip. Don't put their backs up even if you hate the bastards.

C. Be a tour guide. Take them round the site, show them what you want them to see, and steer them away from what you don't want them to see. Introduce them to the people who'll get on well with them, and keep them away from the people who won't be able to restrain their contempt. If it doesn't seem like a major intrusion on their privacy, stay with them, in a friendly way, and talk them through everything they see.

D. Be ready to deal with the ones who don't turn up. However good your publicity, lots of journalists won't be able to make it, but might still be interested. They'll want to know what's happening and how things are going, so there should be at least one person on site with a working and charged-up mobile phone whose number has been posted on the press release. Journalists are suckers for on-the-spot reports, so when they ring, put some excitement into your voice. Give them plenty of color, make them feel they can see it.

Being Interviewed

Interviews and studio discussions are a bloodsport, and you, the interviewee, are the one of the combatants. People watch or listen to them in the earnest hope that one or other of the participants will be gored to death. Like any other fight, you win not through brute force but through skill. And, like any other sport, there are rules you have to follow.

So here are the rules and tactics. Try them out on your friends. Practice, as in any other sport, is absolutely critical. If you haven't done many interviews before, get someone to pretend to be the interviewer a day or two before you're due to go on, and get her or him to give you a hard time. See how you do, and find out which parts of your technique you'll have to brush up. If you don't practice, expect to be caught out every time. If you do practice, you'll find that all you have to do is repeat what you've been through already, which isn't a scary prospect at all.

Rules and tactics

i. Be informed. This is the golden rule. Remember, this is an information war, and the best warriors are the ones with the best information. Don't go into a studio unless you're confident that you know your subject better than the person you're up against, and can head her or him off if they try to outfox you with some new facts. This means lots of reading. Make sure your information is reliable and stands up to critical examination.

ii. Be calm. However much the issue, or your opponent, winds you up, you mustn't let it show. Generally the calmest person is the one whom the audience sees as the winner. This doesn't mean you can't be passionate and enthusiastic - indeed these are good things - but your passion and enthusiasm must be tightly controlled and mustn't, repeat mustn't, spill over into anger. If necessary, take a deep breath before answering the question. Be polite but firm with everyone.

iii. Be concise. It's amazing how little time you get. You must know exactly what you want to say, and say it in as few words as possible, with clarity and determination. The main point must come at the beginning of the interview: you should summarize the whole issue in just one or two sentences before expanding on your theme.

iv. It's the answers that count, not the questions. When you go into the studio, you must know exactly what you want to say and how you want to say it. Don't be too scrupulous about answering the question: deal with it as briefly as possible, then get to the points you want to make. You must leave the studio at the end of the interview knowing you've made the most important points as effectively as possible.

v. Don't try to make too many points. You want to have a maximum of three main lines of argument. Any more and both you and the audience will get lost.

vi. Finish your point. If the interviewer tries to interrupt you before you've got to the important thing you want to say, don't be afraid to carry on talking until you've said it. Sometimes it's useful to say "Just a moment" or "If you'd let me finish". Be assertive without being rude. Don't let yourself be bullied.

vii. Simplicity. Make your points as clearly as possible. Use short sentences and simple words. Try not to use sub-clauses (a sentence within a sentence), as you might confuse the listener.

viii. Turn hostile questions to good account. There are several ways of doing this:

Deal with the question quickly, then move on to what you want to talk about. This is the simplest and safest way of handling tricky questions. A good way of going about it is to agree with part of the question, then show that it's not the whole story. "Yes, of course human welfare is critically important, but that doesn't mean we should neglect animal welfare. At the moment, x per cent of all dairy cows die before they're six years old because of the terrible conditions they're kept in. Now that doesn't do them any good or us any good." Or: "Yes, destroying the potatoes will affect the farmer's livelihood to a small extent. But the issues at stake are enormous. If these plants were allowed to reach maturity.

Deliberately misinterpreting the question. "You're quite right, there were a lot of undesirable elements at the protest. In fact, there's an urgent need to regulate the security industry properly. Do you know that a lot of security guards have criminal records for violent assault? It's symptomatic of the whole road- building industry: they don't care what they do or who they do it to."

Undermining the factual content of the question. In other words, don't let the interviewer push you into a corner. (e.g. Q: "But, given that biotechnology is necessary to feed the world, what you're really doing is putting wildlife before humanity." A: "In fact you're wrong to suggest that biotechnology is necessary to feed the world. By concentrating food production into the hands of a few multinational corporations..."). But always, always, bring your answer back round to the point.

ix. Leave your notes behind. If what you want to say isn't in your head, you shouldn't be in the studio.

x. Project. You're not having a casual chat with the interviewer or the other guest. You have come to make some important points, and you must get them across in such a way that the viewer or listener can't possibly ignore them. This means that you should put more emphasis into your voice than you'd do in a normal conversation. It might sound strange to you when you first do it (and practice it before you do a real interview), but on air it'll sound fine. In fact, if you don't do it, you'll sound flat and boring. TV and radio are all brightness and color, and you must sound bright and colorful to make an impact. It's a bit of a balancing act, projecting well without ceasing to stay calm.

xi. Use your body. On TV a good rule is that your head and torso should stay fairly still (which makes you seem solid and trustworthy), but your hands should lend emphasis to what you say (they can help to drive your points home). Eyebrows are pretty useful too.

xii. Humor. If you can do it without making it sound frivolous or irrelevant, a bit of humor can help a lot to win your audience over. Gently satirizing your opponent's position is often quite effective. ("Well, let's take a look at this Countryside Alliance. Its main funder is the Duke of Westminster, who, as his name suggests, is a horny-handed son of rural toil. Unfortunately, his rolling green acres in Mayfair and Belgravia keep him in town quite a bit, but at least that allows him to fight off the undemocratic tendencies of the urban oppressor from the benches of the House of Lords").

xiii. Don't hate your opponent. This is perhaps the hardest task of all, but it is absolutely necessary. Whatever you might think about the person you're up against, you must leave your feelings at the door of the studio. If you allow yourself to hate them, you'll lose your cool, lose focus and lose public sympathy. One way of dealing with your feelings is to regard your opponent as someone who has been misled and needs to be told the truth. Think of your role as being to put them right, rather than to put them down, and you'll find that when you go into the studio you'll be a lot less tense. And remember - when you go into a studio, you are there to tackle one issue and one issue alone, not to put right the ills of the whole world.

Concentrate on one task, and you'll make life a great deal easier for yourself.

Following Up

A. Keeping up your contacts

It's a good idea to write down the names and numbers of all the journalists you meet, and maybe make a brief note of what they're like and how they treated the subject. If you're going to be involved in a long campaign, keep the sympathetic ones informed about it every so often, so that when the next event comes up, they won't have forgotten what it's all about. Share your contact lists and experiences with people in other campaigns: it could help them a lot.

B. Complaining

Activists are treated unfairly by the press more often than any other group of people except gypsies, travelers and asylum seekers. The reasons are not hard to divine: we are challenging powerful vested interests, we are prepared to break the law and, above all, we can be discussed collectively without any fear of libel, as we do not belong to incorporated organizations.

So, for example, the Sunday Times could claim that "eco-terrorist" tree- sitters at Solsbury Hill booby-rapped buildings, attacked guards with catapults and crossbows and dug pitfall traps full of metal stakes, safe in the knowledge that, as long as no one was named, no one could sue, even though the whole bullshit story was refuted by the police. Had it, on the other hand, made the same allegations about security guards, Reliance would have sued the pants off it, even if neither the company nor the guards were named, as Reliance was the only security company on site.

Redressing bullshit stories is difficult, time-consuming and often very frustrating, but sometimes it works. If we don't complain, the media will feel free to do the same thing again and again, so it's worth trying, even if it ends in failure. Here are the options:

i. If you're fantastically rich, have been named in person and have lots of free time, sue for libel. It's not an option for most of us, but if you know a lawyer who's prepared to work for free and the case is a clear-cut one, it is worth sending a threatening letter. If it's sufficiently convincing, it might prompt the paper or program to issue an apology and settle out of court: and a few thousand quid for your cause never goes amiss. Don't try it without a lawyer: they'll just laugh it off. There is no legal aid for libel cases.

ii. If you or your movement have been slagged off unfairly in the papers, but there's no possibility of legal redress, there are several other options. None of them are ideal, but they're all better than nothing: Write a letter for publication. Make sure it's short, pertinent and not personally insulting. Humor and irony are particularly useful weapons. If you can bear to, talk to the journalist who stitched you up. Be ultra-reasonable and put your case calmly and clearly. Just occasionally, this works, and she or he will relent and write a follow-up piece, putting your side of the story. This is very long shot but, if you've got good writing skills, see if you can persuade the comment editor to let you write a column putting your case.

iii. If you've been stitched up by the broadcast media, your prospects are rather better. It's governed by quite a few laws and codes, which are supposed to protect both the public interest and individual rights. Remember: if they stitch you up and you don't complain, they'll do it to you again and again.

[Excerpted from "An activist guide to exploiting the Media" by George Monbiot http://www.gn.apc.org/pmhp/gs/handbook/media.htm with modifications by the editor.]

* * *

Doing Radio Interviews

[Excerpted from "Say it on the radio", Institute for First Amendment Studies http://www.ifas.org/fw/9703/guide.html with modifications by the editor.]

If you're part of an activist group, talk radio is one of the most effective ways to reach your audience. The opportunities afforded are unparalleled.

Equipment needed

A telephone is all the equipment you need. With a simple phone, you can be interviewed from anywhere — from home, your office, or even a hotel room. My favorite "studio" is in my office facing my computer. Additionally, I use a telephone headset, which I highly recommend.

One benefit of a headset is free hands. With free hands you have the freedom to access reference materials, your computer, and jot down notes while you are talking. Before doing a show, I bring up a "radio" file on my computer. In this file I have all sorts of useful information for the interview (more on this later). I also use the computer to type notes to myself. For instance, during the breaks many ideas come to mind for the next segment. I quickly write down these ideas. Some hosts have a knack for throwing their guests off target, so you want to do everything you can to stay focused. The one other thing I always have on hand is a big glass of water.

Getting on talk shows

Talk radio hosts are always looking for interesting, informative, and provocative guests — not necessarily in that order. Actually, depending upon the size of the station, it's often the "producer" who finds and schedules guests. However, you don't need to know producers to get on a talk show.

Unless your issues have national impact, you should limit your exposure to the community in which your group operates. One advantage to doing local radio shows is that you can be interviewed in the radio station's sound studio. Using a studio mike results in better audio quality than when you use a telephone. Another advantage is face to face visual cues often help during an interview.

If your group's interest is national in scope, you might want to start with talk shows in your city, then appear on shows in other communities. Nationally syndicated shows will save you time by hitting many cities at once.

How to start

If your group has a publication, add the names of known talk show hosts to your mailing list. Also, send them newspaper clippings about your group, press releases, and brochures. If you or someone in your organization writes a book related to the purpose of your group, send book reviews or a sample copy to the radio station. (Your publisher may assist you in this.) Be sure to include contact information so producers will know whom to contact.

Simply sending timely material will most likely get you on the air. If your organization is national in scope, there's another cost-effective way to get your spokesperson on shows all over the U.S. Bradley Communications, of Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, publishes Radio-TV Interview Report — The Magazine to Read for Guests & Show Ideas. Published three times a month, this excellent magazine is sent to 4,000 hosts and producers. Each issue contains 64 pages of display ads from experts and opinion makers.

When planning our next media strategy, I always consider advertising in Radio-TV Interview Report. Because of its frequency and reach, activists can organize a radio blitz lasting a few weeks, or even months. I continue to get calls months after my ads run. The staff at Radio-TV Interview Report will write your ad for you. All you have to do is supply the information you want talk show hosts to have about you and your group. This information might include your group's newsletter or magazine, a book, a photo (for TV), or a press release. You'll receive a fax of your ad copy for your approval before it runs. You can run your ad once, three times a month, or once a month for as long as you like; it's up to you. Radio-TV Interview Report has never failed to get me on more shows than I could handle, easily justifying the cost of the ads. You might also land some TV talk shows. To contact Radio-TV Interview Report, write to PO Box 1206, Lansdowne, PA 19050-8206, or call Jack Lewis at 610-259-8206, ext. 408.

When a producer calls

When a producer calls, make sure you learn the name of the host, the radio station, and its location. You should also ask about the host's position on the issues you'll be discussing. Although it doesn't matter what your host's positions are, it's good to know in advance.

For some reason, Christian stations often try to hide that fact from me; then attempt to ambush me on the air. I still do those stations, but I like to know in advance if they have a Christian format. Recently, I've begun to look for a station's call letters in the National Religious Broadcasters' Directory of Religious Media.

Ask how long you'll be on; don't assume it'll be an hour, it might be less. Many of my appearances have been extended for an extra hour or so. It all depends on audience response — and whether another guest is scheduled to follow you. You want to be sure you have enough material on hand for a longer show. Most programs are live, and because of callers, are the most interesting. Occasionally, the host will tape your interview for a later airing.

Write down the producer's name and phone number. If you have to cancel, call as far in advance as you can.
When setting the date and time, be sure you understand what time zone the show is in. Don't forget to write down all this information in your appointment book.

What to expect on the air

Here are some of the notes I have in my computer's "radio" file. I have a collection of one-liners I've successfully used as retorts, facts and legal cases regarding my issue, talking points, and even a few interesting quotations.

Before each interview I type in the station's call letters, city, and the host's and producer's names. Then I add personal notes, such as Relax, enjoy yourself, use and keep a sense of humor, remember you don't have to answer every question, answer questions with questions when appropriate, promote issue X. While all this may sound trite, sometimes in the heat of a talk show these things are easily forgotten. I also prepare a brief opening statement, and a note to myself about what issues to focus on during the program.

A friendly host will support and guide you during the show. Even the most hostile host is just doing it for effect, and, if you know your material, you'll do fine. Most callers are polite — but often ill-informed. An experienced host will keep the unruly ones in line, sometimes by cutting them off.

Don't "read" any statements, including your opening remarks. Remember not to say anything that you would not want to go out over the air. You may think you're off the air when you're not. Keep your remarks short, develop good sound bites, and have plenty of facts on hand. Never attack the host or callers. Above all, be yourself. Keep cool and maintain a sense of humor.

It's extremely helpful to provide contact information — an 800 number, or a simple address — so listeners can reach you. It's also a good idea to make a free offer, such as a copy of your newsletter. Remember, you're on the air to promote the mission of your group, advance a cause, or deal with specific issues. Stay on target.

Organizing and Action

Types of Organizing

Community Organizing

Steps for Getting Started

REMEMBER: If you are going to do community organizing, DO IT IN YOUR OWN COMMUNITY! Don't be a missionary!

Research and Preparation. Look around your community and determine what issues it faces. Talk to your neighbors, what issues do they think are important regarding the community. Determine what kinds of projects you can develop or direct action you can take that meet the community's needs or address the communities issues. Find out if others are already working on the problems in their community and if they've been effective and what you can learn from them. Determine what kinds of resources you have available and who in your community might be useful allies in accomplishing your goals.

Volunteering or Starting your Own Group. If there is a group doing work in your community and they are effective, it would be a good idea to volunteer with them to gain experience. If there is no group doing work on the issues you are concerned about or existing groups are not effective, start your own group but try to remain on friendly terms with existing groups.

Planning. Set a goal. Devise objectives (or strategies) to achieve the goal. Devise actions to achieve the objectives.

Community Building Projects. Plan everything you do in your community with an effort to bring people in the community together and get them involved. Make a special effort to get people in the community who are not politically conscious to work on projects and become active. In short, gear your work towards not just helping the community but towards actually strengthening a sense of community.

Fight Prejudice and Patriarchy as you Organize. Make a special effort to ensure that your organization and its projects reflect the racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the community and make feminism and anti-racism explicit parts of your organization's politics and policies.

Get Attention. Be visible in your community, make every effort to let people in your community know you exist. Seek press attention when you do an action, gain a victory, or establish a project.

* * *

The Six Panther Ps

When people think of the Black Panther party they think Black. Some Black people who have some guns who tried to kill some white people. That they were declared by the FBI as the most dangerous bunch of Black folks trying to kill white folks. In actuality, the Black Panther Party was a group unique from a lot of the other groups who formed during the 60's. It was formed among the unemployed, ghetto sections of the Black youth, unlike the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, which was an organization of ministers who were well placed in their communities. The Panthers formed their organizing on the basis of the bottom of society - the youth who had no job prospects, who had been hurled off the plantations and into these cities. Of course in that situation, they had a constant confrontation with the police, and the Panthers largely grew out of that relationship. In the course of their organizing, we have identified six things they did (or did not do), "the Six Panther Ps" which we see as useful, which confirmed our experience in dealing with the unemployed, displaced people at the foundation of our movement. The Panthers were primarily in the Black communities, but we're seeing that the problem of poverty today is across color lines. It was a different period back then, but we saw in what they were doing something we can learn from. We've been testing them as a means of building these five ingredients and building a movement for power.

The first P is program. A program indicates the values, goals, issues and interests of that segment of the population that you're focusing on. We believe that everybody should have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, that that should not be reduced in any way. However at this stage of history the upper classes of this country have given up that creed. We think everybody should have those rights, especially in a country that has the kind of productive capacity that this one has. These things should be non-negotiable. We think that our program is a program that is in the interests of the majority of the American people, and not the one that is pursued by those being controlled by the rich. We profoundly believe that, and have found that our experience corroborates that. Not only that, but we are being echoed throughout the world - throughout world people are having to take up this basic program, seeing its fundamental moral principles. We organize and unite around the program.

The second P is protest. You cannot be hurting and don't holler. We believe that if you hurt, holler. You got to do something about it, you can't just accept the situation. The segment of the population that we're focusing on, upon which we're building a movement which includes all segments, is a section which has to move, has to protest, and can't accept business as usual. To stand still is to die. To stand still is to go backward. To stand still is to succumb to the kind of depravation that we're seeing. The idea of protest is key, and of course you see in the experiences of the Panthers and other such groups in the past, their ability to affect public opinion, their ability to get heard was based on continuing campaigning and activities around their basic needs.

The third P is projects of survival. This country and this economy can be characterized in one word, "surplus." It's a shame, but that's the reality. People can't acquire things, but there's surplus. They're throwing away food, but people can't eat. Downstairs [in the human rights house] we have more clothes than we can give away. There are surplus nurses, and not enough medical care. Surplus doctors, surplus lawyers! And yet, people are going without. There are 12 million empty luxury housing units in this country. Look it up! Not run-down units, but luxury units. They are sitting there empty while we have six to ten million people who are living with their parents, or living on the grates, or in shelters and so forth who are all homeless. 12 million units is equivalent to the entire housing stock of Canada - surplus! So, the question of projects of survival is how do we develop a cooperative effort to procure those surpluses, and to use them as a lever for organizing. And we do, we have food distributions. The way we were able to solidify our position when we took over the church was that regularly we were able to get extra baby carriages (cause we don't have cars), fill them with food and go door to door with the carriages and talk to people about their issues and our issues and how we can unite. We get food from bakeries, from food places that are throwing it away. And the food's perfectly good, if you see it you'll see that there ain't nothing wrong it. Projects of survival are especially significant in our organizing experience. Our organizing attracts people on the basis of their immediate needs - food, housing, childcare, etc. Activities like tent cities and housing takeovers, are designed to meet people's needs and build organization in the process. As we come together to meet our common needs, opportunities for political education and other key elements arise. We have tremendous strength by virtue of addressing the problems which people are struggling with day-to-day. However, we don't just try to meet people's individual needs - we use that struggle to fight for everyone's needs to be met. But that is how many people come into relationship with our organizing efforts. So projects of survival are absolutely key as far as our organizing method.

The fourth P is publicity work. We, through various forms, generate messages - through newsletters, through T-shirts, or posters, through speaking engagements, through the internet or other things. These are all very critical in terms of getting through our message, and talking to each other and informing ourselves. You gotta have publicity.

The fifth P is political education. We're constantly engaging people in study of what their situation is, understanding what their situation is, so they can articulate what's going on and to educate others. Our basic motto is "each one teach one," and "the more you know, the more you owe," to pass on the message and so forth. The significance of this P should not be underestimated. Political education is essential for building resistance, which is at the base of all our efforts. Also, political education can deepen people's commitment to a struggle. It's important that political education isn't seen as something separate from organizing, but as an inseparable part of the process. When political education is irrelevant to the issues that people are struggling with, it's ineffective. It's more effective when it explains their experience, allowing them to gain clarity and insight into their struggles and the struggles of others.

The last P is plans not personalities. This particular P is a lesson from the panthers by way of a negative experience. The Panthers, in what they were doing was targeted by the FBI as the most dangerous organization to the natural security of this country. The FBI developed a plan to fragment, dismantle and destroy this organization. They recognized that that organization was organized as factions around personalities, around a leader, Through subterfuges, infiltration, fake letters and so forth the FBI was able to get these leaders to fight one another. Organizationally, the Panthers were based around these personalities more than a policy, plan or program. A sustainable organization is not dependent on a leader, but dependent on a plan, principles, a policy. We see that as very key.

[Excerpted from "On the poor organizing the poor" by Willie Baptist http://www.kwru.org/educat/orgmod2.html#six with modifications by the editor.]

* * *

Labor Organizing

Some Basic Steps To Organizing a Union
http://bari.iww.org/organize/steps1.html

Although every workplace is different and the needs of workers vary, there are some basic steps involved in winning a union voice on the job. This will be primarily useful to workers in the United States of America.

To begin organizing a union at your workplace there's a simple starting point before going through the steps listed below: quietly talk to a few of your coworkers who you think may be interested in organizing.

Step 1 - Build an Organizing Committee

Identify your leaders (the one's who will take initial responsibility and initiative in starting your organizing campaign) and an organizing committee representing all major departments and all shifts and reflecting the racial, ethnic and gender diversity in the workforce is established. If you don't do this, you will have a much more difficult task ahead of you. Organizing committee training begins immediately. Committee members must be prepared to work hard to educate themselves and their coworkers about the union and to warn and educate coworkers about the impending management anti-union campaign. The employers will most likely engage in a well organized, well funded anti-union campaign. Numerous books have been written for employers who desire union free workplaces, but a well prepared organizing committee can withstand the employer's propaganda. The organizing committee must be educated about workers right to organize and must understand their union's policies and principals of democracy and rank-and-file control.

Also at this step basic information about the workplace must be gathered including:

Workplace Structure: departments, work areas, jobs, shifts

Employee Information: name, address, phone, shift, job title, and department for each worker (employee list) employer information: other locations, parent company, product(s), customers, union history, financial assets, economic strengths and weaknesses.

Intangibles: informal cliques, social networks, and existing relationships - the employer will try to use these to their advantage to try and disrupt union organizing activities. Your organizing committee must accommodate for these existing relationships.

Step 2 - Determine Your Issues

The committee develops a program of union demands (the improvements you are are organizing to achieve) and a strategy for the union recognition campaign. A plan for highlighting the issues program in the workplace is carried out through various organizing campaign activities.

Step 3 - Choose your Union Recognition Strategy

Your coworkers are asked to join the IWW (or some other union of your choice) and support the union program by achieving union status. You will need to determine which union recognition strategy is best.

You can choose one of the following:

Card Check Recognition - Your Organizing Committee and/or a representative from your union informs your employer that a sizable majority (at least 50% plus one person, but ideally 60% or more) have signed union authorization cards. If successful, your employer will voluntarily agree to recognize your union as the legal bargaining agent for your bargaining unit.

Strike for Recognition - A sizable majority (at least 50% plus one person, but ideally 60% or more) agrees to a short strike to force the employer to recognize your union. If successful, your employer will voluntarily agree to recognize your union as the legal bargaining agent for your bargaining unit.

Call for an NLRB Sponsored Election - Your Organizing Committee manages to convince your coworkers to sign union authorization cards. The goal is to sign up a sizable majority. You only need 30% of the workforce to sign authorization cards to have an NLRB (National Labor Relations Board) Sponsored Election.

This "card campaign" should proceed quickly once begun and is necessary to hold a union election. If successful, your employer is legally required to recognize your union as the legal bargaining agent for your bargaining unit.

Organize Direct Action on the Job - You needn't achieve legal recognition of your union to act as a union. However, you have no legal recourse should your actions be resisted by the employer.

You will have to determine which recognition strategy is best for your situation.

Step 4 - Achieve Union Recognition or Status

Should you win voluntary recognition from your employer, you can skip right to the next step, "Negotiating a Contract". If you choose to "Organize Direct Action on the Job", you should read about How to Fire Your Boss. Otherwise you will need to have an NLRB Sponsored Election.

To hold an election, the signed authorization cards are used (and required) to petition the state or federal labor board to hold an election. It will take the labor board at least several weeks to determine who is eligible to vote and schedule the election. The union campaign must continue and intensify during the wait. If the union wins, the employer must recognize and bargain with the union. Winning a union election not only requires a strong, diverse organizing committee and a solid issues program, but there must also be a plan to fight the employer's anti-union campaign. For more details about the types of anti-union tactics your employer might use, please read about your rights in the workplace (on our organizing page).

Step 5 - Negotiate a Contract

The organizing campaign does not let up after an election victory. The next goal of the campaign, a union contract (the document the union and the employer negotiate and sign, covering everything from wages to how disputes will be handled), is still to be achieved. Workers must be mobilized to support the union's contract demands (decided by you and your co-workers) and pressure the employer to meet them. Remember, the contract only represents a short term goal in organizing. You may choose to pursue long term goals after you negotiate your first contract.

Organized! Make It Your Union!

The IWW is the most democratic union in the world. We believe that every member is potentially an organizer and a leader. We will train you how to achieve this (all you have to do is ask). Should you choose another union to represent you, the IWW is still here to help you where the other unions cannot or will not.

IWW members run their own local unions and there's no other union where this is a truer statement. But you don't "go it alone," either. We will be with you every step of the way helping with everything from organizing to to negotiating your first contract ... and helping you learn how to build and run your own local union.

Will we still be there after you win your first contract? Absolutely! While we want and encourage our locals to make their own decisions on issues of local importance, the resources our union will always be there when you need them. We believe that An Injury to One is an Injury to All.

http://bari.iww.org/organize/steps2.html

You must determine your Union Recognition Strategy, based on the needs of your workplace, and the mutually agreed upon, democratic decisions of you and your coworkers.

In the United States of America, you can achieve official union recognition through the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in the private and/or non-profit sector, or the Public Employees Relations Board (PERB) if you work for the government (though most government employees are unionized anyway). Certain industries fall under special jurisdictions (such as Railway Workers, which are governed under the National Railway Act). For this reason we focus mainly on NLRA (National Labor Relations Act) union recognition. For further information, you can check out the National Labor Relations Board website (http://www.nlrb.gov/).

Your co-workers are asked to join the IWW (or some other union of your choice) and support the union program by achieving union status. You will need to determine which union recognition strategy is best. Workers in the United States can choose one of the following:

Voluntary Card Check Recognition
Strike for Recognition
Call for an NLRB Sponsored Election
Organize Direct Action on the Job

Each strategy has pros and cons, and we will describe each below

Strategy #1 - Voluntary Card Check

If you use this strategy, you must convince at least 50%-plus-one of you and your co-workers to sign union authorization cards (or a petition), and then convince your employer to voluntarily recognize your union as the legal representative for your bargaining unit. Ideally, you will want to convince more than 50%-plus-one to sign cards.

50%-plus-one means one more than half of the work-force. For example, in a workplace of 100 (excluding management), that means 51 workers. In a workplace of 99 (excluding management), that means 50 workers. In a workplace of two (excluding management), both workers must agree to recognition to achieve a majority. Unions have discovered that 60% - 70% pro-union support is an ideal majority under most circumstances no matter what recognition strategy you use.

A union authorization card is not a membership card. By signing a card, a worker is not agreeing to join a union, nor does it require them to vote "yes" should an NLRB or PERB sponsored election occur. When a worker signs an authorization card, they include their name, address, phone number (if they have one), e-mail address (if they have an account), the date, their job title, hours per week and per day of work, rate of pay, and their signature. That information is confidential. Only the union and the NLRB or PERB has access to that information. The employers and their agents do not have access to the authorization cards.

Your Organizing Committee and/or a representative from your union informs your employer that a sizable majority (at least 50%-plus-one, but ideally 60% or more) have signed union authorization cards. If successful, your employer will voluntarily agree to recognize your union as the legal bargaining agent for your bargaining unit.

The positive aspect of this strategy is, that if you are successful, you can skip the NLRB (or PERB) sponsored recognition election (more about that later).

The downside of this strategy is that if you DO win voluntary recognition, if there is a minority of workers that are opposed to unionization, they might believe that their democratic rights have been violated, and they might not be as easy to work with in the future.

In reality, employers rarely grant voluntary recognition (though it does happen on occasion). And even when an election is held, some workers may be opposed to unions in general. Whether or not your employer chooses to recognize your union voluntarily will depend on their outlook (some employers are fairly favorable to unions), and whether or not they think they can defeat the unionization efforts through an NLRB election.

The IWW is different from most other unions, because individuals may join the IWW before winning union recognition, but like authorization cards, membership in the IWW does not require a member to sign an authorization card or vote "yes" in an election. If you have any doubts about a co-worker's support or commitment, do not ask them to join the union.

Strategy #2 - Strike for Recognition

Striking for Recognition is one way to utilize direct action on the shop floor. If you have near unanimous support for the union in your workplace (perhaps as much as 90% or more) and your employer refuses voluntary card-check recognition, you can attempt a short strike to force your employer to recognize the union without going through a drawn-out NLRB or PERB election.

Positive effects of striking for recognition include skipping a lengthy election process, and if you are successful, you and your coworkers will gain a very strong sense of empowerment.

However, striking for recognition is a very risky strategy. If you do not have near unanimous support, those in your workplace that oppose unionization will most likely be even less supportive of your efforts. Also, if your boss has the economic and political means to withstand your strike, you could find yourself out of a job.

Striking is protected concerted activity by workers under the NLRA, as long as the workers and the employers don't agree to no-strike provisions. Striking is generally prohibited in a great many circumstances under the Public Employee Relations Act (PERA), although government agencies are less likely to oppose unionization.

Striking for Recognition is sometimes used to convince an employer to stop delaying NLRB elections (more about that below), and is most likely to succeed when your employer is a small business owner with few economic and political assets beyond their business, or in massive industrial unions that are strong and very well organized (more about that in Long Term Goals).

Keep in mind that signing an authorization card or joining the IWW as a dues paying member does not require a worker to vote yes to strike (though IWW members are prohibited from crossing picket lines whether IWW sponsored or sponsored by another union).

Strategy #3 - NLRB or PERB Sponsored Elections

This is the most common and established strategy for winning union recognition from an employer in the United States of America. In many industrialized nations (for example, Canada), 50%-plus-one support is sufficient to achieve union recognition. Not so in the USA.

If you manage to sign up as little as 30% of the non-management employees in your workplace, you may ask the union of your choice (or an independent union or your own creation) to petition the NLRB (or PERB) to hold a secret ballot election for Union Representation. If 50%-plus-one vote in favor of unionization, your union may legally represent your bargaining unit. If you are successful, your employer is legally required to recognize your union as the legal representative for your bargaining unit. You may petition for an election even if you first attempt voluntary recognition through a card-check or strike and are not successful.

Despite the assurances promised under the National Labor Relations Act, elections are not necessarily advantageous to union organizing campaigns:

The employer can appeal to the NLRB (or PERB) for delays; such tactics are used to lengthen organizing campaigns and drain popular support for the organizing campaign among the workers. The employer can question the make-up of a bargaining unit and challenge the union's right to represent certain workers (or the employer may try to hire new workers with non-union attitudes to try and sway a close vote in their favor).

Although anti-union intimidation tactics are illegal, anti-union statements from the employer are not. The longer it takes to have the election, the more anti-union sentiment the employer can spread.

For these reasons, most unions will attempt either voluntary card recognition or strike for recognition strategies before attempting NLRB or PERB sponsored elections, and the IWW is certainly no exception. Since employers know that elections are generally to their advantage, it is wise for your organizing committee to achieve a sizable majority of 60% or greater pro-union support before you petition for an election.

Once the election date is set, it's imperative that your organizing committee solidify its base of support in the shop. It makes sense to call upon the union to build support within the shop as well as without. Informal networks of supporting community groups that support unionization can make all the difference in winning an election (especially if the workers realize that they are not alone in their efforts).

The union is allowed to have a representative present on the day of the election to observe the proceedings and to ensure that the election is indeed fair and impartial. Neither the employer nor the union may intimidate or coerce workers into voting against their individual will. Should the union win a majority in the election, your organizing committee can move onto the next step: negotiating your contracts or achieving your desired goals.

Strategy #4 - Direct Action

You needn't achieve legal recognition of your union to act as a union. Legally guaranteed representation didn't exist in the United States of America until the passing of the National Labor Relations Act in 1937. Prior to then, unions sometimes negotiated contracts with their employers, but they carried no federally binding status. The IWW traditionally rejected time-contracts for numerous reasons. One such reason is that employers usually demanded that unions agree to "no strike clauses" (such provisions are fairly standard in contracts these days).

This did not prevent the One Big Union from winning huge gains for the working class. For example, the Agricultural Workers Organization (AWO) and the Lumber Workers Industrial Union (LWIU) of the IWW managed to win major concessions from the employers in those industries during the 1910s. In 1917, the LWIU won the eight hour day for lumber workers in the Pacific Northwest by striking on the job. Unions would state their demands in writing and unless the boss agree to them, the workers could strike or engage in on-the-job direct action, including work-to-rule, sabotage, or sit-down strikes, as IWW-led workers often did. The International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) of the AFL-CIO was born through such a strike, and is now one of the most militant, strong, and democratic unions in the AFL-CIO. For more information check out the historical archives section of the Timber Workers Industrial Union website.

Today the IWW accepts contracts in some circumstances, but even the best contract is at best a temporary truce with the boss class in the class war. Contracts do not guarantee the conditions outlined within them unless the union remains strong and organized. Under many circumstances, a well organized union doesn't need a contract to ensure that their demands are met (though they'll often accept one, and the bosses will usually ask for one anyway). Direct action on the job can be utilized even if a union fails to gain official recognition from the employers. However, you have no legal recourse should your actions be resisted by the employer in such circumstances, and many workers are not willing to take such radical steps to protect their rights. Therefore, winning gains through direct action is very risky, and most unions discourage direct action. Not so with the IWW. If you choose to take direct action on the shop floor, as long as the goals advance the cause and improve the conditions of workers and the working class, the IWW will back you 100%.

Organizing a Union is only the First Step in the struggle to abolish the wage system. Once that is done, there are many further goals you will want to consider:

(1) Subsequent Contracts -- After you negotiate your first contract, you will have to consider the next one. At least six to nine months before the expiration of the first contact, you should be prepared to begin negotiating for the next contract. Even before you begin such negotiations, you and your coworkers should be ever mindful of things you want to make better and what your employers have up their sleeve. It's a given that they'll want to negotiate a contract that takes away as many benefits and pro-union clauses as you want to add; they might even try to bust your union altogether. The contract is but a temporary truce in the class war. The bosses never sleep, and neither should you.

(2) Publicizing your victory -- Once you win an organizing campaign, you will want to let the world know about it. A mistake workers often make is assuming that their

workplace and the issues concerning them are isolated from the rest of the world. Not so. Your ability to organize a union at your job will help others organize a union at theirs. The more workers that are organized (especially if the unions they organize are democratic), the greater power workers will have to control their destinies.

(3) Organizing the unorganized in your industry -- Once you win your first victory and negotiate your first contract, other unorganized workers that work in your industry may approach you and ask you about organizing. (They'll certainly approach your union). It is in your best interest to help them organize. The workers in your industry are not your competition. The bosses "compete". Workers do not. Bosses pit one set of workers against another in hopes that they can keep wages low, conditions bad, and workers helpless. When all workers in one industry organize into one big union, they have far more power to control their destiny and make conditions better for themselves.

(4) Building Industrial Unions -- Workers gain economic power by organizing along industrial lines. Unfortunately the employing class and the business unions keep workers divided, pitted against each other in meaningless squabbles that actually hurt all workers roughly equally (whether or not one workers "wins" a dispute with another). Bosses and Business unions try to keep workers, even organized ones isolated from the other workers in their industry. The IWW will help you fight this tendency by helping you organize a union in your industry, joining with other workers in your industry, and helping rank & file workers in other unions build rank & file opposition to their fat-cat union bosses. This is done by all workers in one industry working together and all workers in all industries cooperating with each other to form one big union. (that's not to say that

disputes don't arise, but under One Big Union, they can be worked out democratically).

(5) Industry Wide Contracts -- When you have achieved large scale industry-wide unionization, even if you haven't organize all workers into your union, it is still possible to organize industry wide contracts that cover workers in all shops organized into the union. There are numerous advantages to this strategy, including the ability to negotiate conditions for all workers at once instead of piecemeal. Some industry-wide contracts can even stretch across national boundaries.

(6) Hiring Halls -- Another benefit of organizing by industry is the ability to establish union hiring halls. Employers post job openings with the union. The union then dispatches workers on a daily basis from the union hall in person or by phone. Workers are hired from a pool of qualified union members or applicants who then are dispatched to a job. This allows workers who cannot get full-time employment in a specific industry to still work regularly in that industry until hired full time. It also allows workers to avoid the bureaucracy of unemployment offices, arbitrary standards for hiring and firing set by employers, and allows for stronger rank & file union control.

(7) Abolition of the Wage System -- All of these things help us build towards our final goal of abolishing the wage system and building a new society within the shell of the old. However, these are by no means the only tactics that will be used in this ongoing struggle. The battle for industrial democracy (and true freedom) is multifaceted and complex. There is no one single way to win. We will no doubt add more as time goes by. Perhaps some of these

new tactics will be pioneered by you and your coworkers. Only time will tell.

* * *

Student Organizing

High School Student Organizer's Manual
http://www.ocap.ca/dispatch.cgi/students/High_School_Student_Organizers_Manual

Intro

This manual is being written on the brink of a campaign to challenge Mike Harris, the premier of Ontario. High school students are fighting along with unions, Indian nations, homeless, university students, and community groups, to mount a real resistance to this government. This manual was written to aid in the progression of this specific campaign, but we hope that it will reach further than this one fight, further than the borders of Ontario itself, and continue to help student organizers in the future.

The purpose of this manual is to inspire high school organizers, by explaining the fundamentals of organizing a walkout, showing some of the actions that are possible for youth to engage in, and to explain the theory behind walkouts and other actions. And we'll try to do it with out completely boring you to death too!

How to Organize a High School Walkout

Organizing a walkout is a straightforward operation. The basic idea is that you pick a date and time and explain your cause. Then you just have to make sure that as many students as possible know. If you let students know that a walkout is happening, then you can bet that they'll walkout.

At some schools the administration has more control over students than at others. But the conditions for walkouts seem to exist in almost every school. School does not address the real needs of students. It is often under-stimulating and there are many places students would rather be. Even if students aren't walking out for the specific political reasons organizers have planned, the action of walking out is inherently political, and should be encouraged for this reason.

Spreading the word

To make sure a walkout happens, the most important thing is to publicize the fact that one is being planned. The most common way is handing out a leaflet or handbill with the time, date and possibly a rallying point. Even if the number of leaflets you hand out is a fraction of the total student population, you can be sure that the information will be spread by word of mouth. A buzz is often created to the point that everyone knows.

Some other ways of getting the word out range from putting up posters in and near the school, especially in the stalls of the bathrooms where they will stay up longer, to slipping leaflets and handbills into student lockers, to holding teach-ins in the days leading up to the walkout, or as one person did, getting up on a table in the cafeteria and giving a speech. To stop propaganda from being removed, the date and time of one walkout was scrawled on the bathroom mirror in lipstick. On the morning of the walkout, cover the blackboards in every room in the school with slogans and information.

There are tons of other very simple tactics you can employ. Post information about walkouts on the desktop of all the computers in your school: labs, libraries, classrooms etc. If computers are hooked up to the Internet, make a 1-page website with walkout information and make it the homepage that loads every time someone opens their browser. Some schools host night school classes. This is an ideal time to do propaganda blitzes if you're worried about being caught. Just remember to be quiet.

Another more daring tactic is taking over the school intercom system and announcing the walkout. To pull this off in one school students barricaded themselves inside the room where the announcements were made.

One of the rewards of organizing in schools is that you are forced to talk to kids you might otherwise never speak with. Schools are built on segregation; students are separated by grade, by race, and by cliques. When you engage in high school organizing you are forced to break those barriers and challenge your assumptions about others. When spreading the word, speak to everyone, not just those whom you know.

The time for walkouts

What time of day should you plan the walkout? The easiest time to hold a walkout is between classes or at lunch. If you call the walkout during class, you need to know that students are willing to be openly rebellious. Students have to get up and leave class right in front of their teacher with the faith that others will follow them. It is much harder to pull off this sort of walkout, but also that much more satisfying and disruptive to the functioning of the school.

One tactic to help build walkouts that take place during class time involves a team of kids running through the hallways, opening doors and announcing the walkout to each class. While requiring generous amounts of both stealth and speed, this is often an easy and effective way to get students right out of class.

Timing the walkout is also important if you plan to meet up with a demonstration or other event. You may need to leave yourself a large amount of time to get where you're going. Things always take longer than expected, and something always goes wrong. If there's an action to follow, it'll help determine what time you choose to plan the walkout for.

So once you walkout where do you go?

Once you walkout you are faced with the question of "what to do now?" This is often the toughest question facing organizers of walkouts. While the walkout is an action/protest in and of itself, most walkouts have a specific action/protest/rally for students to congregate at, after they have left school. This also heightens the political impact of the walkout, and legitimizes (in some sense) the exodus from school.

Some walkouts are planned to co-ordinate with or compliment other events. For example, meeting up with a rally being organized by another group. In this case, the work is mostly done for you. You might also want to organize a rally or protest of your own. If you do organize your own rally, remember that students get bored listening to dry speakers, chanting tired slogans, or being at a lame, watered-down demonstration just like everyone else. Make sure to include elements of creativity and spontaneity, but be realistic in what is possible.

Many rallies take place in a location away from the school , while others happen just outside of it. These are especially powerful when you're protesting problems that come right from within the school. At many suburban and rural schools there just isn't anywhere in walking distance to go to. The main strength of
walkouts just to the front of the school, is that you don't lose any students who wouldn't have traveled far to go to some rally. You've got the numbers there, so make use of them.

Whether you are protesting at a corporate headquarters, government office, or at your school you can cause a lot of ruckus with a large amount of students. Don't be afraid to be confrontational. If you're up against something that's pissed you off, to the point of organizing a walkout, don't let some foolish sense of respectability restrain you. Let it out, you have a right to be mad!

Even if they don't rally

Don't get discouraged if only a fraction of the students who walked out actually came to a protest or rally, few usually do. Students are already bored and apathetic towards the standard methods of protest. Even if your action is totally awesome and exciting and students are still shying away from it, this isn't grounds to write them off.

Even the most apathetic student who walks out is exerting their political force. The sheer fact that school is often such a deadening place to spend one's day is reason enough for someone to walkout. Students are more than happy to leave school even if they have no idea what the political backing for the particular walkout is, because for the most part, students hate the institution of school itself. Don't dismay at those who leave school and head straight to the mall. Their act of walking out, under any and all terms, radically challenges the legitimacy of school in general. Come to terms with what you can expect from students, but always work for more.

What students do

While students walking out of schools is disruptive, it doesn't have the same economic impact as workers occupying an auto plant or walking off the job. The real impact of high school walkouts is often not the act itself, but what students do once they hit the streets. For example, during the LA riots the government decided to close high schools. Without the institution holding them back, angry youth flooded the streets and actively took part in looting and rioting.

When walkouts happened in solidarity with striking support staff, students gathered for a rally and then took over an intersection outside the provincial legislature. It was blockaded and held for a significant amount of time, by students. This bolstered media coverage, helping the union in their strike.

How discipline is kept at schools

Schools are built on rules, they need rules! They need to control students and they do it through rules and grades. To run, schools need obedience, even if the rules are menial, dumb, degrading or completely opposed to the interests of students.

The way the authorities make sure their rules are followed is by singling out individuals who resist and punishing them; an example is set as a warning to others. To run a school "effectively", the administration consistently punishes the most disruptive students in order to keep others at bay.

The way that youth have some power to challenge the rules, is to act together, united. If many students act in unity, it becomes impossible for schools to hand out punishments to everyone. Imagine a school where over half the students were suspended on the same day. It would simply never happen.

This is how walkouts work. Everyone walks out and are able to protect each other since punishing everyone would be impossible. The same is true for other forms of protest like dress down days where everyone at a uniformed school refuses to wear their uniform. But this is not only true for protests.

The everyday functioning of the school is also run this way. If enough students refused to sing the national anthem everyday, the rule could never be enforced. The more people skip school each day, the less punishment will be dished out for doing so.

Students organize walkouts for all sorts of political reasons. For better portables, in support of extra curricular activities, to get classes taught in their own language, against laws which infringe on the rights of youth, or to protest in support of different causes around the world. But as well as the stated political reasons for walking out, walkouts are an example of students exercising their power. Walkouts demonstrate how little power the school administration has over us, and in a small way the balance of power is shifted.

Principals and vice principals move quickly to reassert control over the school. But an example is set. Each example of student power is threatening to the authorities, as students begin to realize how little power the administration actually has.

How schools keep control

School administrations need to keep control. They will do what is in their power to stop walkouts. Sometimes they make announcements to the school that everyone who walks out will be punished. While they know that punishing everyone would be impossible, sometimes a threat is enough of a deterrent. The best way to avoid this is to educate each other on how walkouts work, and explain the strength in numbers.

Another way they try to prevent walkouts from spreading is by singling out and punishing the organizers, before or after a first walkout has occurred. They are unable to punish everyone, but if they punish organizers they may be able to scare anyone from organizing walkouts in the future.

There are ways that we can defend organizers. A simple way is by being discreet and covert, trying to not let the staff or administration know who is distributing all those leaflets. One way of being discreet is to flyer outside a friend's school while they flyer at yours.

Including as many students as possible in the planning stage is another idea. This makes leaders less and less important in disruptive processes, and not only that, it results in more effective and democratic actions. They are still able to target leaders, but it may make it harder for them.

If they attempt to expel an organizer you should contact a lawyer, a local legal clinic, or even a law student. It is not an actual legal proceeding but just the presence of a lawyer is often the difference between being expelled or not. In Toronto, Justice for Children and Youth offer defense for students facing expulsion. Don't worry about that too much, it is unlikely they will expel someone for organizing a walkout.

If organizers are punished it can be helpful to launch a campaign to protect them, getting other more 'established' community or student groups involved, and pledging official support. Pass a petition around, get supportive school staff and parents to speak with the administration. If the authorities know they're going to be hassled to death by going through with an expulsion or punishment, it is likely that they'll cease their crusade.

Other actions and directions in high school organizing

Walkouts are a common form of political action taken by students, but there are many other sorts of actions that students have taken. This is obviously not a complete list, since there are countless anti-school actions that students engage in everyday, but hopefully this will be inspiring, and will serve to get the creative juices flowing.

Instead of calling walkouts some organizers have called "skip off days", where students take the whole day off. This is usually not coupled with any overt political message other than "youth would rather not be in school".

In the past, students have waged larger campaigns like student strikes, where schools are shutdown for an extended period of time. Some militant students have even taken over their school.

Another action common at schools with uniforms is dress-down days. On a chosen day no one wears their uniform. These can be organized in a similar way to walkouts, just spreading word throughout the school of the date of the "dress-down day".

One group of students in the United States had started a petition to try to get better cafeteria food, but their appeals to the principal went unanswered. They held a protest in their cafeteria about the horrible food they were being served, and before long a giant food fight had broken out. To stop the incident from spreading, the principal made an announcement the next morning that they would start serving better food in the cafeteria.

At some schools you can freely distribute condoms, but at others distributing condoms has been banned, whether or not they are needed by students. In some of these schools, groups of students have been able to get large numbers of condoms donated and then distribute them freely to students. Actively breaking absurd school rules with a large group of people is always a good way to challenge the rule itself.

Another idea is creating your own school media: a zine, underground newspaper, or radio show. When 3 students decided to leave their school they wrote a letter explaining why they were leaving and suggested that other students do the same. It created a mass departure from the school (the ultimate walkout!). This idea can also be used to anonymously target teachers who are abusive, sexually harass students or are in other ways extremely heinous, and therefore unfit to teach.

When a media monopoly began infesting schools, angry students took action by starting a spontaneous graffiti campaign. They spray-painted and markered over the company advertising which was pasted all around their school, calling for advertisements to be banned from school settings. The reclaiming of space is an issue unto itself. Through public art attacks, students have taken back space in their school simply by painting all over it.

During a support staff strike, youth at various schools took action through numerous tactics to show their solidarity (in obvious ways or otherwise). Many schools were "vandalized" with toilet paper being strung up along trees, garbage cans tipped over in the hallways, and graffiti covering anything and everything. This example of student restlessness as displayed in the media gave light to the necessity of having support staff in schools. On the morning of a proposed walkout to show solidarity with the strikers, students at one school found doors into the building locked with U-locks and chains, and keyholes filled with glue. Since no one could get into the school to open up on time, the walkout did not even need to happen, and classes for the day were canceled. This approach calls for meticulous planning and the will to take a risk. Use it sparingly.

Bill 160

There were 6 or 7 of us sitting in the room. We had just decided to hold a Toronto-wide high school walkout because of Mike Harris' plans to pass bill 160; a bill that would overhaul the education system, slash funding, and increase the divisions between students, teachers and the various board's of education. We brainstormed all the schools we could think of, that we or our friends attended, or even schools where we had acquaintances who we thought might want to organize walkouts. Our list had about 20 schools where we thought walkouts were really possible.

We made posters and handbills that gave information on what we were planning. We contacted friends and visited schools. We put up posters in the bathrooms, which stayed up for a long time. At other schools we handed out leaflets the morning of the walkouts. Both ways word spread and soon everybody knew. My high school was left completely barren. Everybody walked out. Walkouts took place in over 15 schools. Small groups from each school made their way to Queen's Park, where over 500 angry students held their protest.

Later, when teachers were on strike, we organized flying pickets to support them. We met early in the morning at one school, marched on the picket lines with those teachers for a while, then marched on to another school to support the teachers there. We boosted the spirits of teachers wherever we went. We made our way to the ministry of education, passing schools along the way, and encouraging students to join us. We met up with other students who were already holding a protest at the ministry.

In the end, the union leadership backed down from their strike. Bill 160 got passed. Our actions ended essentially in failure. But even as it was being passed, students spontaneously walked out and protested outside Queen's Park. When the bill passed we blocked traffic on Queen's Park Circle, and disrupted the legislative reading of the bill.

While walkouts and student disruptions are no sure way to settle demands (let alone challenge bills being passed in parliament), they are an important tactic of direct refusal to those things that threaten or qualitatively impoverish the lives of students. Even in overall failure, it is important to recognize the victories that were won. We radicalized an unknown amount of students, and forged massive links of solidarity in the process.

Conclusion

Youth are robbed of their dignity. We are bored and unstimulated by school. They are not run in our best interest and they don't teach us some of the things we need most. We have little access to things we need to enrich our lives and better ourselves. We are viewed as criminals and it makes us targets of harassment from the police and other authorities.

We need to struggle so all of us can live with dignity. We struggle to make our lives better. School can be a degrading place and we need to fight against that. Students have a lot of power. Just organizing walkouts and protest with that power is not enough. We need to find ways to actually solve the problems we face in our lives. Walkouts can be a part of that, but we need to find creative, bold and long-lasting solutions if we are serious about radically changing school as we know it.

Fight to win!

Building Coalitions

What is a Coalition?

A coalition is a group of organizations and individuals working together for a common purpose. There are two types of coalitions:

1."One issue" or event coalitions only have to agree on one particular issue. The coalition is dissolved when the issue has been solved or the event has been coordinated.

2."Multi issues" coalitions have related issues, such as nutrition and health, child care needs, elderly health care, or the environment. This more permanent type of coalition recognizes the value of mobilizing together for action over a longer time. To be effective the "multi issues" coalition should have a date set for work to be completed. The coalition can always be reorganized if there is still a need.

The Value of Coalitions

Coalition building is needed when one organization recognizes it alone does not have the technical capability or people power to have a real impact on an issue.

Coalitions assist in:

Setting priorities for action
Helping to identify specific data and informational needs from other groups and agencies
Sharing resources and expertise
Broadening the development of new audiences
Improving the chances that the issue (or issues) will get coverage in the media

Analyze Your Own Organization Before You Begin

The self-interests of your own organization should be analyzed before asking other groups to join a coalition. Ask yourselves these questions:

What can be gained from joining with others?
Will the advantages outweigh the disadvantages?
How can we best communicate the demands of other groups to our members?

If You Join a Coalition, What Are You Promising?

Troubleshooting problems as an ongoing effort increases the chances for successful coalition building. The following rules for commitment should help keep all groups on the same track.

Each organization must be committed to the problem.
Each organization must be committed to coordinate to solve the problem, not just gain public recognition.
Each organization must be committed to the belief that every other organization has the right to be involved.
Each organization must be committed to open communication.
Each organization must be committed to coalition recognition, not individual recognition.

Getting Started with a Plan

Certain tasks must be carried out by a coalition, regardless of the type, in order for it to function efficiently. These include:

Naming a facilitators or coordinators
Obtaining commitment from members
Assessing needs and gathering background data
Writing a mission statement
Determining short or long-term objectives
Evaluating the work as the coalition progresses
Exploring opportunities for additional funding
Carrying out the plan
Determining ways to orient new members

[Excerpted from "A Process for Building Coalitions" by Dr. Georgia L. Stevens http://www.ianr.unl.edu/pubs/family/g988.htm with modifications by the editor.]

Types of Actions

Protests

Protest Survival Skills

What we present here is a brief guide to surviving public order situations and slowing down or preventing the police from gaining the upper hand once a situation has occurred. Bear in mind that the police are much better equipped and trained for close combat than you or I. They will have been psyching themselves up for hours, have plenty of reserves standing by, and will feel confident with the law behind them, beating the police is about outwitting them, not necessarily hitting them over the head.

• Don't be tempted to stand there and fight--get out to where you can cause some damage or disruption without the police around.

• Keep moving around, as a group and individually, fill gaps, never stand still -- chaos puts the police off.

• Police attempts to divide the crowd and the formation of police lines must be nipped in the bud.

• DON'T BE INTIMIDATED.

• Do everything in small teams, prepare in advance.

• Think defensively, protect each other and escape routes.

• Always face outwards, away from us and towards them.

• Link arms as often as possible, form barriers, use your body.

• Move quickly and calmly, never giving the police time to react.

Preparations

Staying out of jail and hospital need not be hard work. Most people caught up in riots manage it -- even a fairly high proportion of the really pissed-off ones. But with a bit of forethought you can turn surviving a public order situation into living a public order situation!

The Aims of the Protesters

No one really “wins” at the end of the day, but that doesn’t matter. What matters is that you are unhurt, still free and that some egg is still stuck to the face of your original target, after the police have come and gone.

With all that in mind, we suggest you stick to these 3 basic aims when you find yourself in a riot.

1 - Getting you and your mates away safely, rather then fighting.

2 - Finding a place to cause embarrassment and economic damage to your real target, rather than fighting.

3 - Helping others in trouble by administering first aid and de-arresting, rather than fighting.

Sticking Together

Always try to form an affinity group before setting out and at the very least have a buddy system whereby everybody has one person to look out for them and to act with when a situation arises.

Affinity groups are just a handful of people who work together as a unit, as and when circumstances arise, they can meet beforehand to discuss issues and possible reactions, practice or role play scenarios, the more your group meets, the quicker the reaction times will get and your effectiveness will improve. Affinity groups can often act without the need for internal discussion, they naturally develop their own shorthand communications and can divide up skills and equipment amongst each other. Water, d-locks, paint, first-aid, food, banners and spare clothes is a lot for one person to carry, but divided up between 5 people it’s nothing.

Do pay attention to what you wear in advance. Although no one wants to go to a street party or demo dressed in full body armor, consider precautions that are discreet, adaptable, easy to apply and discard.
Thinking about these things in advance will help:

1 - Surveillance Masking up makes it difficult to identify individuals in a crowd and if everyone masks up no one will stand out. The cut off sleeve of a long sleeved t-shirt makes a good mask. Wear it casually around your neck. If you wear glasses use a cut off section of a short stocking (hold-ups work best as they have thick elastic) instead of a t-shirt, this prevents glasses from steaming up. You can use it as a hair tie, if you’re a hippy type, until you need it. A hooded top will cover most of your face and a baseball cap

on its own provides good protection from most static cameras, which are usually mounted high up. Sunglasses give good protection against harmful rays including UV and CCTV.

2 - Truncheon blows. A placard makes a good temporary shield and light strips of plastic under your clothing on the forearm could offer some protection. The best protective clothing however is a good pair of running shoes.

3 - CS spray. The best authorities suggest a solution of campden tablets (used to clean home brewing equipment), some say use lots of water, but it’s effectiveness is unclear. WHATEVER YOU DO DON’T RUB IT IN or take a hot shower. If in doubt get clear and let the wind blow it away from your skin, this will take 20 minutes. It is highly recommended that you carry eyewash wipes that are provided in most first aid kits.

4 - Someone needs to watch the police from a good vantage point, so that their next move can be preempted. On top of the sounds van is not a good place- -no one can hear you shout “here come the dog handlers! fucking run!” and any gestures you do will be interpreted as dancing...

5 - Sitting down is good for dissuading the police from charging, but you should only do it in large numbers and the crowd needs to feel confident. We advise you to sit down as soon as the shout goes up, hesitating is not good, you can assess the situation once you’re down there. hopefully others will do the same. If it still looks viable 5 seconds later, link arms with your neighbors. There are times when sitting down is not really recommended -- horses are maybe too unpredictable but the authors have never seen horses charge into a seated crowd, the way they

do into a standing crowd. It’s a good way to avoid the crowd getting split up. Some particularly violent gangs of police just aren’t worth it either. Only experience will teach you when to sit down.

6 - Throwing stuff is a defensive tactic, it is not wise to throw stuff at the police at the best of times, it only winds them up so they hit you harder. We shouldn’t stop having respect for life just because the police have. If you want to throw do it defensively, strategically, and en mass -- a constant hail of debris creates ‘sterile areas’ into which the police don’t want to go, thus keeping them at arms length.

REMEMBER: don’t throw to attack or cause injury, only throw from the front, then disappear into the crowd, only wankers throw from the back.

7 - Barricades can be more hassle than they are worth. A solid impassable barricade can reduce your own options when you need to run. Bear in mind that anything you build now you are likely to get dragged over later -- leave out the barbed wire. The best barricades are random matter strewn all over the place--horses can’t easily charge over them, police find it hard to hold a line amongst them, but individuals can easily pick their way through. If you know police are advancing from only one direction and you have clear escape routes behind, barricading can be sensible. The tactics cops developed during the 1980’s riots was to drive vans into crowds with TSG in the back, jump out and arrest everyone they caught. Barricades are an effective way of preventing this.

8 - The best form of defense is CHAOS! A complicated hierarchy needs orders to act on and those orders come from individuals making informed decisions. If the

situation changes constantly they simply cannot keep up. Keep moving all the time, weave in and out of the crowd. Change your appearance. Open up new directions and possibilities, be unpredictable. If you find yourself standing still and passive for more than a minute then you've stopped acting defensively.

Basic Police Choreography

With any crowd the police will be looking to break it up as soon as possible. Crowd dispersal is achieved with baton charges, horse charges, and sometimes CS gas and vehicles. Some particularly nasty or out of control units may pile straight into the crowd, but there is usually a gap between the time they arrive and the start of dispersal. This stalling time is often just dithering by the commanding officer, or psyching/tooling up time for the troops (the latter is easy to spot). this aside, there are only 3 more reasons why they aren't wading straight in, see if you can spot them next time they're waiting for "kick off".

They first divide the crowd up into 'actors' and 'viewers', small groups of officers will move into the crowd and start politely encouraging the timid ones onto the pavement. Once the crowd starts moving the way they want, those little groups of cops will get bigger and start joining up. Before you know it, there's two crowds on two pavements with two lines of cops penning them in. let the head cracking commence, or...

• Don't stand and watch them

• Don't look like you'll let them anywhere near you

• Spot gaps in the crowd and fill them in

• Work out which space they want to take and get there with your mates first

• Get long tarp banners to the front to stop them advancing and filming

• Protect your escape routes by standing in them

• Get those who have turned into spectators off the pavements, back in the crowd and moving around

Of course, now having resisted being split up and penned in, they may just let fly with the baton charge. Fair enough, but you're in a stronger position to deal with it and escape. Whatever happens next, don't just stand there waiting for it. If you've managed to get their line drawn far away, you've bought valuable time and space -- so use it! Even if their line is right up against you, they still haven't broken down your
numbers.

However, it's only a matter of time before the police try and get closer/break you up again use the time to get out of there slowly and in one block. (This is the last thing they want -- a large mob moving around
freely.) Whatever you do, don't stand there waiting for them to try again, you are now in control to go and do whatever you want, so do it.

If they have blocked your only exit, try...

Counter Advancing

This involves moving your lines forward into theirs, thus gaining more space and opening up more exits. Use the front line as a solid wall, linking arms and moving slowly forward. Use the long banner like a snowplow. (This stops them from grabbing you or breaking the line, but they can still hit you with truncheons.)

Snow Plows

A line of crowd control barriers can also be carried by the front line like a snowplow to break into the police ranks. The point of the 'plow' can then be opened once their line is breached and the barriers pushed to the side to contain the cops. This all needs a lot of coordination and balls. The advantage gained will not last long, so push all your ranks through the gap right away.

Using Your Body

Your body is your best and most adaptable tool. It is best used in concert with others. for instance it could take a long time for twenty to scale a wall, but stand two people against the wall, bowed together with their arms locked with two more crouched at their feet and you've got a set of human steps! (Those waiting to climb can link arms around the steps to protect them.) Always look for ways to use your body to escape.

Reformation

Keep looking for ways of increasing your numbers, by joining up with other groups and absorbing stragglers, everyone has to get out and you'll stand a better chance of getting out unharmed, with all your belongings and equipment if you leave together at the same time.

Snatch Squads

When the police want to isolate and arrest an individual in a crowd they will usually employ a snatch squad.

Watch for groups of 10 or so fully dressed up cops, rallying behind the police lines, they will be instructed by evidence gatherers and a superior (you can often spot them pointing out the person to be snatched), the lines will open temporarily to let the snatch squad through. Half the officers will perform the snatch, the other half will surround them with batons, hitting anyone who gets in the way. Once they have their target he/she is bundled away behind police lines.

Try and beat the snatch squad by:

1 - Keeping the crowd moving around.

2 - Spot the squad preparing.

3 - If possible warn the target to get the hell out of the area.

4 - Linking arms in an impenetrable wall in the squads path.

5 - Surround the squad once they are in the crowd and intimidate them so much that they panic and give up.

6 - If you are being grabbed or pressure pointed, keep your head and arms moving.

De-Arresting

The best time to do this is as soon as the snatch has happened, you need a group who know how to break grips and some people to act as blockers, once you've got your person back, all link arms and move off into the crowd, the police may try and snatch back or arrest one of the de-arresters.

[From "Guide to Public Order Situations" by Peasant Revolt (?)
http://www.pan-edmonton.f2s.com/educate/resources/survival.pdf]

* * *

Strikes and Labor Actions

How to Fire Your Boss

The indignity of working-for-a-living is well-known to anyone who ever has. Democracy, the great principle on which American society is supposedly founded, is thrown out the window as soon as we punch the time clock at work. With no say over what we produce, or how that production is organized, and with only a small portion of that product's value finding its way into our paychecks, we have every right to be pissed off at our bosses.

Ultimately, of course, we need to create a society in which working people make all the decisions about the production and distribution of goods and services. Harmful or useless industries, such as arms and chemical manufacturing, or the banking and insurance scams, would be eliminated. The real essentials, like food, shelter, and clothing, could be produced by everyone working just a few hours each week.

In the meantime, however, we need to develop strategies that both prefigure this society AND counteract the day to day drudgery of contemporary wage-slavery. Direct action in the workplace is the key to achieving both these goals. But what do we mean by direct action?

Direct action is any form of guerrilla warfare that cripples the boss' ability to make a profit and makes him/her cave in to the workers' demands. The best-known form of direct action is the strike, in which workers simply walk off their jobs and refuse to produce profits for the boss until they get what they want. This is the preferred tactic of the "business unions," but is one of the least effective ways of confronting the boss.

The bosses, with their large financial reserves, are better able to withstand a long drawn-out strike than the workers. In many cases, court injunctions will freeze or confiscate the union's strike funds. And worst of all, a long walk-out only gives the boss a chance to replace striking workers with a scab (replacement) workforce.

Workers are far more effective when they take direct action while still on the job. By deliberately reducing the boss' profits while continuing to collect wages, you can cripple the boss without giving some scab the opportunity to take your job. Direct action, by definition, means those tactics workers can undertake themselves, without the help of government agencies, union bureaucrats, or high-priced lawyers. Running to the National Labor Relations Board (N.L.R.B.) for help may be appropriate in some cases, but it is NOT a form of direct action.

What follows are some of the most popular forms of direct action that workers have used to get what they
wanted. Yet nearly every one of these tactics is, technically speaking, illegal. Every major victory won by Labor over the years was achieved with militant direct actions that were, in their time, illegal and subject to police repression. After all, until the 1930's, the laws surrounding labor unions were simple -- there were none. Most courts held labor unions to be illegal conspiracies in restraint of "free trade," and strikers were routinely beaten and shot by police, state militia, Federal troops, and private security goons.

The legal right of workers to organize is now officially recognized in the U.S., yet so many restrictions exist that effective action is as difficult as ever. For this reason, any worker contemplating direct action on the job -- bypassing the legal system and hitting the boss where s/he is weakest -- should be fully aware of labor law, how it is applied, and how it may be used against labor activists. At the same time, workers must realize that the struggle between the bosses and the workers is not a badminton match -- it is war. Under these circumstances, workers must use what works, whether the bosses (and their courts) like it or not.

Here, then, are the most useful forms of direct action:

Slowdown

The Slowdown has a long and honorable history. In 1899, the organized dock workers of Glasgow, Scotland, demanded a 10% increase in wages, but met with refusal by the bosses and went on strike. Strike-breakers were brought in from among the agricultural workers, and the dockers had to acknowledge defeat and return to work under the old wages. But before they went back to work, they heard this from the secretary of their union:

"You are going back to work at the old wage. The employers have repeated time and again that they were delighted with the work of the agricultural laborers who have taken our place for several weeks during the strike. But we have seen them at work. We have seen that they could not even walk a vessel and that they dropped half the merchandise they carried; in short, that two of them could hardly do the work of one of us. Nevertheless, the employers have declared themselves enchanted with the work of these fellows. Well, then, there is nothing for us to do but the same. Work as the agricultural laborers worked."

This order was obeyed to the letter. After a few days the contractors sent for the union secretary and begged him to tell the dockworkers to work as before, and that they were willing to grant the 10% pay increase.

At the turn of the century, a gang of section men working on a railroad in Indiana were notified of a cut in their wages. The workers immediately took their shovels to the blacksmith shop and cut two inches from the scoops. Returning to work they told the boss "short pay, short shovels."

Or imagine this. BART (Bay Area Transit Authority) train operators are allowed to ask for "10-501s" (bathroom breaks) anywhere along the mainline, and Central Control cannot deny them. In reality, this rarely happens. But what would management do if suddenly every train operator began taking extended 10-501s on each trip they made across the Bay?

Work to Rule

Almost every job is covered by a maze of rules, regulations, standing orders, and so on, many of them completely unworkable and generally ignored. Workers often violate orders, resort to their own techniques of doing things, and disregard lines of authority simply to meet the goals of the company. There is often a tacit understanding, even by the managers whose job it is to enforce the rules, that these shortcuts must be taken in order to meet production quotas on time.

But what would happen if each of these rules and regulations were followed to the letter? Confusion would result -- production and morale would plummet. And best of all, the workers can't get in trouble with this tactic because they are, after all, "just following the rules."

Under nationalization, French railroad strikes were forbidden. Nonetheless, railroad workers found other ways of expressing their grievances. One French law requires the engineer to assure the safety of any bridge over which the train must pass. If after a personal examination he is still doubtful, then he must consult other members of the train crew. Of course, every bridge was so inspected, every crew was so consulted, and none of the trains ran on time.

In order to gain certain demands without losing their jobs, the Austrian postal workers strictly observed the rule that all mail must be weighed to see if the proper postage was affixed. Formerly they had passed without weighing all those letters and parcels which were clearly underweight, thus living up to the spirit of the regulation but not to its exact wording. By taking each separate piece of mail to the scales, carefully weighing it, and then returning it to its proper place, the postal workers had the office congested with unweighed mail on the second day.

Good Work Strike

One of the biggest problems for service industry workers is that many forms of direct action, such as slowdowns, end up hurting the consumer (mostly fellow workers) more than the boss. One way around this is to provide better or cheaper service -- at the boss' expense, of course.

Workers at Mercy Hospital in France, who were afraid that patients would go untreated if they went on strike, instead refused to file the billing slips for drugs, lab tests, treatments, and therapy. As a result, the patients got better care (since time was being spent caring for them instead of doing paperwork), for free. The hospital's income was cut in half, and panic-stricken administrators gave in to all of the workers' demands after three days.

In 1968, Lisbon bus and train workers gave free rides to all passengers to protest a denial of wage increases. Conductors and drivers arrived for work as usual, but the conductors did not pick up their money satchels. Needless to say, public support was solidly behind these take-no-fare strikers.

In New York City, I.W.W. restaurant workers, after losing a strike, won some of their demands by heeding the advice of I.W.W. organizers to "pile up the plates, give 'em double helpings, and figure the checks on the low side."

Sit-down Strikes

A strike doesn't have to be long to be effective. Timed and executed right, a strike can be won in minutes. Such strikes are "sit-downs" when everyone just stops work and sits tight, or "mass grievances" when everybody leaves work to) go to the boss' office to discuss some matter of importance.

The Detroit I.W.W. employed the sit-down to good effect at the Hudson Motor Car Company between 1932 and 1934. "Sit down and watch your pay go up" was the message that rolled down the assembly line on stickers that had been fastened to pieces of work. The steady practice of the sit-down raised wages 100% (from $.75 an hour to $1.50) in the middle of a depression.

I.W.W. theater extras, facing a 50% pay cut, waited for the right time to strike. The play had 150 extras dressed as Roman soldiers to carry the Queen on and off the stage. When the cue for the Queen's entrance came, the extras surrounded the Queen and refused to budge until the pay was not only restored, but tripled.

Sit-down occupations are still powerful weapons. In 1980, the KKR Corporation announced that it was going to close its Houdaille plant in Ontario and move it to South Carolina The workers responded by occupying the plant for two weeks KKR was forced to negotiate fair terms for the plant closing, including full pensions, severance pay, and payment towards health insurance premiums

Selective Strikes

Unpredictability is a great weapon in the hands of the workers. Pennsylvania teachers used the Selective Strike to great effect in 1991, when they walked a picketline on Monday and Tuesday, reported for work on Wednesday, struck again on Thursday, and reported for work on Friday and Monday.

This on-again, off-again tactic not only prevented the administrators from hiring scabs to replace the teachers, but also forced administrators who hadn't been in a classroom for years to staff the schools while the teachers were out. The tactic was so effective that the Pennsylvania legislature promptly introduced bills that would outlaw selective strikes.

Whistle Blowing (The Open Mouth)

Sometimes simply telling people the truth about what goes on at work can put a lot of pressure on the boss. Consumer industries like restaurants and packing plants are the most vulnerable. And again, as in the case of the Good Work Strike, you'll be gaining the support of the public, whose patronage can make or break a business.

Whistle Blowing can be as simple as a face-to-face conversation with a customer, or it can be as dramatic as the P.G.&E. engineer who revealed that the blueprints to the Diablo Canyon nuclear reactor had been reversed. Upton Sinclair's novel The Jungle blew the lid off the scandalous health standards and working conditions of the meatpacking industry when it was published in the early 20th century.

Waiters can tell their restaurant clients about the various shortcuts and substitutions that go into creating the faux-haute cuisine being served to them. Just as Work to Rule puts an end to the usual relaxation of standards, Whistle Blowing reveals it for all to know.

Sick-In

The Sick-In is a good way to strike without striking. The idea is to cripple your workplace by having all or most of the workers call in sick on the same day or days. Unlike the formal walkout, it can be used effectively by single departments and work areas, and can often be successfully used even without a formal union organization. It is the traditional method of direct action for public employee unions, which are legally prevented from striking.

At a New England mental hospital, just the thought of a Sick-In got results. A shop steward, talking to a supervisor about a fired union member, casually mentioned that there was a lot of flu going around, and wouldn't it be too bad if there weren't enough healthy people to staff the wards. At the same time -- completely by coincidence, of course -- dozens of people were calling the personnel office to see how much sick time they had left. The supervisor got the message, and the union member was rehired.

Dual Power (Ignoring the Boss)

The best way to get something done is to simply organize and do it ourselves. Rather than wait for the boss to give in to our demands and institute long-sought change, we often have the power to institute those changes on our own, without the boss' approval.

The owner of a San Francisco coffeehouse was a poor money manager, and one week the paychecks didn't arrive. The manager kept assuring the workers that the checks would be coming soon, but eventually the workers took things into their own hands. They began to pay themselves on a day-to-day basis straight out of the cash register, leaving receipts for the amounts advanced so that everything was on the up-and-up. An uproar ensued, but the checks always arrived on time after that.

In a small printing shop in San Francisco's financial district, an old decrepit offset press was finally removed from service and pushed to the side of the press room. It was replaced with a brand new machine, and the manager stated his intention to use the old press "for envelopes only." It began to be cannibalized for spare parts by the press operators, though, just to keep some of the other presses running. Soon enough, it was obvious to everyone but the manager that this press would never see service again. The printers asked the manager to move it upstairs to the storage room, since by now it merely took up valuable space in an already crowded press room. He hemmed and hawed and never seemed to get around to it. Finally, one afternoon after the printers had punched out for the day, they got a moving dolly and wrestled the press onto the elevator to take it upstairs. The manager found them just as they got it into the elevator, and though he turned livid at this blatant usurpation of his authority, he never mentioned the incident to them. The space where the press had been was converted to an "employee lounge," with several chairs and a magazine rack.

Monkey-Wrenching

Monkey-wrenching is the generic term for a whole host of tricks, deviltry, and assorted nastiness that can
remind the boss how much he needs his workers (and how little the workers need him/her). While all these monkey-

wrenching tactics are non-violent, most of them are major social no-nos. They should be used only in the most heated of battles, where it is open wholesale class warfare between the workers and the bosses.

Disrupting magnetically-stored information (such as cassette tapes, floppy discs and poorly-shielded hard drives) can be done by exposing them to a strong magnetic field. Of course, it would be just as simple to "misplace" the discs and tapes that contain such vital information. Restaurant workers can buy a bunch of live crickets or mice at the neighborhood pet shop, and liberate them in a convenient place. For bigger laughs, give the Board of Health an anonymous tip.

One thing that always haunts a strike call is the question of scabs and strike breakers. In a railroad strike in 1886, the scab problem was solved by strikers who took "souvenirs" from work home with them. Oddly enough, the trains wouldn't run without these small, crucial pieces, and the scabs found themselves with nothing to do. Of course, nowadays, it may be safer for workers to simply hide these pieces in a secure place at the jobsite, rather than trying to smuggle them out of the plant.

Use the boss' letterhead to order a ton of unwanted office supplies and have it delivered to the office. If your company has an 800 number, have all your friends jam the phone lines with angry calls about the current situation. Be creative with your use of superglue. The possibilities are endless.

Solidarity

The best weapon is, of course, organization. If one worker stands up and protests, the bosses will squash him or her like a bug. Squashed bugs are obviously of little use to their families, friends, and social movements in general. But if all the workers stand up together, the boss will have no choice but to take you seriously. S/he can fire any individual worker who makes a fuss, but s/he might find it difficult to fire their entire workforce.

All of the tactics discussed here depend for their success on solidarity, on the coordinated actions of a large number of workers. Individual acts of sabotage offer little more than a fleeting sense of revenge, which may admittedly be all that keeps you sane on a bad day at work. But for a real feeling of collective empowerment, there's nothing quite like direct action by a large number of disgruntled workers to make your day.

[From "How to Fire Your Boss: A Workers Guide to Direct Action" by Boss Busters / Bay Area I. W. W.
http://bari.iww.org/homesites/organize.html]

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Le Tute Bianche, W.O.M.B.L.E.S., Black Blocs, and Police Confrontation

What is Le Tute Bianche / Ya Basta!?

Ya Basta! began in Italy in 1996 as a solidarity network supporting the indigenous campesino uprising of Chiapas in 1994. With it’s roots in Mexico, and following the Zapatista uprising, many Italian Activists gradually created coalitions with the centri sociali (social centers) of Italy, including the Italian squatting movement. Ya Basta became a generation's attempt to affirm free space and it's own visibility, a place in which it would be possible for radical politics to grow outside of any form of institutionalization. The squats provided a space, in many of these cities, for autonomous politics and everyday "free" organizing. In 2000 alone, beginning with the anti-EU and other anti-globalization movements, Ya Basta! Milan organized actions mainly in collaboration with squatters and the so called "tute bianche" or white overalls, a non-institutional anonymous group, who act dressed in white workers overalls and chemical suits. Their wish is to symbolize the invisibility of citizens with no rights, no power, all the same, masses of bodies rendered ghosts by neoliberal policies of the "Global North". Their tactics are hardly passive, however, and usually involve large crowds, utilizing horizontal organization and decision making. They attend demonstrations with pads, shields and helmets, as protection from police brutality. They usually have no pre-defined strategy, instead leaving the decision open to the moment, with the only criteria being not to do anything that would alienate the mass of people involved.

W.O.M.B.L.E.S: White Overalls Movement Building Libertarian Effective Struggles

Since the liberation of humanity and creation of global freedom and equality is not to be stopped by a few thugs with big sticks, it is time to provide self-protection from the depredations of the constabulary.

A large white overall group, padded, helmeted, with breathing protection acting together in a non-hierarchical but self-disciplined way can achieve the following aims:

To facilitate free movement and communication during protests

To stop attacks on demonstrators such as baton charges, horse charges, CS gas and sprays

Be living examples of our libertarian solidarity, organization and humor

To promote mutual respect and protection among demonstrators

The white overall movement has no leadership; everyone involved participates equally in its organization and actions. Open meetings will be held to discuss the ideas, possible tactics and decision-making.

What are Black Blocs?

A black bloc is a collection of anarchists and anarchist affinity groups that organize together for a particular protest action. The flavor of the black bloc changes from action to action, but the main goals are to provide solidarity in the face of a repressive police state and to convey an anarchist critique of whatever is being protested that day.

Is the black bloc an organization?

Some people are under the mistaken impression that one can join the "black bloc organization." There is no standing black bloc organization between protests. There is the anarchist movement which always exists (and has been around for over a century). You can think of the black bloc as just a temporary collection of anarchists that represent a contingent in a protest march. The black bloc is a tactic, similar to civil disobedience.

Why a black bloc?

There are several reasons why some anarchists do black blocs at demos. These reasons include: 1) solidarity - a massive number of anarchists provides cover against police repression and it demonstrates the principles of working class solidarity; 2) visibility - the black bloc as gay pride march; 3) ideas - a way to present an anarchist critique of the protest du jour; 4) mutual aid and free association - provides a visual example of how affinity groups can come together in a larger group and articulate common goals; and 5) escalation - a method for ratcheting up a protest so that it goes beyond mere reformism and appeals to the state to remedy injustice.

* * *

Wombling tips

Here are some tips on preparing yourself for a "white overalls" action. The idea is to help individuals defend themselves from assault by the agents of the state.

Remember: the cops are trained to hurt people. Whenever you hear that two hundred people have been injured on a demonstration, you can safely assume they were not hurt by tripping up and grazing their knees.

This may all sound quite scary, but it is better to be prepared for the depredations of the police than to run around with head wounds.

Think: if we are not intimidated and if we are not injured, attacks will become self-defeating.

We will be able to go home knowing that we have done the right thing: will they?

People

People are most vulnerable to assault and arrest when they are on their own: having at least one friend with you will mean they can watch your back while you watch theirs.

The Wombles strongly recommend that people coming to a mass action are not on their own: find a friend who will come with you AND THEN NEVER LET THEM OUT OF YOUR SIGHT!

Health: Water Water Water!

Regardless of the weather conditions, being a Womble is a very hot business, so you must bring as much water as you can carry. Do not rely on helpful shopkeepers remaining open. You will need AT LEAST TWO LITRES.

People with medical training should make themselves known to the wider group at the earliest opportunity. Likely injuries could include wounds from baton strikes to the head, face and upper body, crush injuries from police vans running over people, or from horse charges. Gas is unlikely to be used though some cops may have pepper spray or small amounts of CS gas.

Overalls

White overalls can be bought for about £3 ($6) each from DIY stores. They are easier to find in 'trade' shops like. New York Ya Basta! wear yellow overalls in solidarity with the yellow suits worn by chain-gang prisoners working on the streets in their country.

Head!

At secret training bases cops are instructed in how to cause maximum damage to an individual: smashing them repeatedly about the head and upper body with a two-foot long steel bar. This - not surprisingly - can be somewhat painful experience.

The only rational response to such tactics is to wear some form of protective headgear. The best option is a motor cycle crash helmet (about £25 [$50]), but these can restrict your sight. On the positive side, they offer all-round protection for your head and face. On the down side, they are almost impossible to smoke in!

Builder's helmets (£4-£8 [$8 to $16] each, from DIY stores) are effective for direct head strikes but offer no protection to the side of the head, the face or your neck. Also, this type of helmet has no chin strap so they are easy to dislodge or lose. While not perfect, they are better than nothing. If you use one, remove the plastic frame inside it and replace it with some bubble wrap (2-3cm thick). You can then wrap tape around the top and around under your chin to make a chin strap. Don't make it too tight otherwise you wont be able to get it off!

Bicycle helmets cost from £10 ($20) each, and offer better protection than builder's helmets and have the added advantage of having a strap to hold it on. Again, little face or neck protection but they are a good compromise solution.

Body

As all good Wombles should already know, the idea is to make good use of the things that everyday people leave behind. This includes old sofas, mattresses, bubble wrap and cardboard.

For the body: take one sofa cushion and remove any external covering. Use a knife or scissors to cut the cushion in half down the center of the thin end, so that you have two pieces to form a front and back. Then cut a semi-circle out of the top of each piece to create a space for your head to go through. (pic 1)

Use strong electrical tape to bind the two pieces together with as much overlap as possible to create double-thickness sections for your shoulders.

The body piece can then be worn either within the white overall or over the top. If you wear it over the top you will need some rope or string to tie it around your body securely.

Limbs

People have been injured by being kicked or batoned across the shins. You could use cricket pads for your legs, or football shin pads, both available from sports shops. Hockey or American football gear works just as well, but is expensive. Skateboard protection (especially elbow, knee and wrist pieces) have been proven useful too. Knee pads can also be bought from DIY shops.

Arm pieces can be made from bubble wrap, cushion foam and cardboard. Fold the card over a couple of times to make triple-ply sheet (about 50cm long x 20cm wide). Take a piece of cushion foam (about 20cm wide x 50cm long x 5cm deep) and tape the card sheet to it. Make sure that the cardboard is on the outside so that it will disperse the pressure from a blow.

Wind the bubble wrap around your arm and the cushion/card to create sleeve; wrap tape around a few times to make it secure - not too tight as you will need to get it off at some point. The same approach can be used for making padding for your legs.

Shields

Trashcan lids are really good if you can find them, though you may need to do some work to make a comfortable strap to attach it to your arm

Alternatively, think inflatable: rubber dinghies have been used by Ya Basta! before (use loads of plastic packing wrap to bind six or seven of them lengthwise so that you have a wide group shield).

Also, ask local garages / car workshops if they have any spare car wheel inner tubes. They usually cost (as second-hand) only 50p ($1) at most, and so a few of these taped to a bit of stiff board (or layered cardboard) can make an effective lightweight shield.

Truck tire inner tubes make good, large defensive barriers, but can cost up to £20 ($40) each new (maybe try scrap metal merchants or car-breakers' yards for supplies).

[From "Hot Wombling Tips" http://www.wombleaction.mrnice.net/tips.htm]

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Further Tips on Physical Protection from Police Attacks

Stuff to think about when making protection:

1. Duct tape (always useful), electrical tape, adhesive tape, super glue, regular glue, spray adhesive, twine, wire, staple gun, etc.

2. Gas masks, filters, respirators (like painters use, handkerchiefs with vinegar in zip-lock bags.

3. Some thing to protect your noggin. Here is a list from best to worse: Motorcycle helmet, army helmet, football helmet (face guard removed) or other sports helmets, bicycle helmet,or skating helmet, construction hard hat, batting helmet.

4. Paint: day-glo orange or yellow; red and black paint may also be useful.

5. Cloth or tarps for banners, the larger the better.

6. Shin guards, sports padding, martial arts padding, construction knee and elbow pads, etc.

7. Foam padding, carpet padding, rubber padding.

8. Chemical suits, rain gear (preferably yellow or orange).

9. Thick and padded gloves or mittens.

10. Raw materials for building DIY armor two-liter bottles, plastic 5-gallon buckets, foam, cushions, garbage cans or lids, etc.

11. Good footwear, boots are best, steel toe is great.

12. Warm thick clothing (to protect from weather and to add padding).

13. First aid equipment: bandages, gauze, anti-tear gas solutions in squirt bottles, etc.

14. Thin PVC piping to hold banners, long cardboard tubes, etc.

15. Tools: Bring lots of extras to an action because you should be able to swap for stuff you do not have or just help out our other comrades.

Ear plugs are useful. They are cheap and will offer some protection against concussion grenades and other acoustic attacks. They are light and easy to use.

It is also good to bring a paper, small pencils (golf or pew pencils) in case. At least one piece of paper should be in your shoe or somewhere else to avoid being taken if arrested. It sucks not having paper in jail. It is useful for all sorts of things. Sharpies are also a high demand item or any other permanent felt tip marker to write numbers on arms and clothing.

People should add to these lists of things. It is key that people come defensively prepared and bring extras to trade and create a mutual aid network.

[From "Protection" by New York Ya Basta! http://free.freespeech.org/yabasta/protection.html]

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Group Movement Situations

Understand your target and your position

The police are much easier to predict than most people fear. Too often, the paranoia of being surrounded occurs in situations where the police are fairly static in their positions. Is your target a building that the police are surrounding in full force? Have they left the streets outside of that perimeter free to protesters or do they have roving columns ready to strike? Have you completed your objective of blockading a conference and the police are trying to break through your formations? Are you just having a spontaneous street party and don’t know when, if, or where the police will show?

Answers to these questions seem simple and obvious, yet too often mobile protesters do not have a clear picture of what the situation is like and communication has broken down too much. Issues like this are what drove armies to have set hierarchies thousands of years ago, and in the framework of avoiding set leadership, communication is our only answer.

Before the day of action, you should already know what to expect. Also pay attention to what the police are intending to do or what extent they want to go to. Is it a city that has sworn off using projectiles? Is the event you are demonstrating at, such as an outdoor swearing-in ceremony, a place where the police are afraid to use tear gas? Have previous police actions demonstrated their intention to make sweeping arrests or do they only pick off stragglers?

While its critical to always be on your toes and never trust the police to operate in a certain way, there are always warning signs you can look for. If an empty bus appears, then you can expect sweep arrests. If a squad of bike police disappeared in another direction, they are probably out to outflank you.

Conversely, always be ready to exploit your own successes. Too often protesters, unready for a success or a hasty police retreat will merely remain in place and not seize their gains. Sticking your neck too far out can be dangerous, but that's when its crucial to have the protection of the masses following up behind.

Movement in a shield wall

For typical movement when not immediately in a confrontational position, you should still be at the ready. Traditionally defensively aware marchers have linked arms to prevent individuals from being nabbed. While carrying a shield in a wall formation, the threat of this is probably much less. But if necessary, persons using one-armed shields can use their free arm to grasp the shield arm of the adjacent person. This becomes problematic with different-handed people however. Furthermore, this tactic should not be employed when in a confrontation so as to allow freedom of movement for the shields.

The critical aspect to moving in any shield wall formation is unison. While demonstrators would discourage any individual to marshal a march, a form of organization is necessary. Unless it is possible to prepare and practice these tactics ahead of time, the best way is the use of simple commands that can be shouted (examples below), including warnings of what is ahead for those who cannot see.

For keeping tight in a march at any pace, the best method is a drum near the front (a drummer in the back won't know what is going on well enough). Given that most marching routes will be pre-determined, directions should not be a major factor - apart from the tendency to lose formation when making turns. Should the shield wall be freely roaming or have loosely laid plans, calling out for slow turns is important ahead of time, especially since intersections are where a shield wall or any march is most vulnerable to ambush.

Scouting

A system of scouts is critical to effectively moving a shield wall, especially when it is unknown where confrontation is to be expected. This does not necessitate a series of out-post necessarily, although that would be useful as well. What a mobile shield wall needs is eyes, which should be on at least all four corners of the march. Bicyclists or possible regular looking pedestrian scouts can cover their own angle of view and operate half of a block to a full block ahead watching their respective side. Communications should be kept with one or more people in the shield wall - presumably in the second row - who are known by others to be in touch with the scouts so that they will be given some priority in emergency situations.

Proper scouting afield can also relay information concerning vehicular movements, such as extra police units arriving in APC's, cars or vans. Another good warning sign is empty buses used for detaining large numbers of protesters.

If there are multiple targeted locations where the march is trying to head (such as trying to breech the perimeter preventing access to a public area), scouts are crucial as to informing which location would be best given shifts in the police strengths.

Barriers

Metal inter-locked barriers are the typical means of blockading marches by the police. When a shield wall approaches a barrier it must be opened or knocked down prior to penetration by the wall. If police protection of the barrier is minimal, people in the back rows should be called ahead to remove the barriers so that the shield wall does not lose its cohesion in the act.

If police are present behind the barrier and safe from an advance, the shield wall should advance close enough so that people reaching from within the wall can pull it down. If the police resist the movement of a barrier, persons in the shield wall should try to advance so that their shields extend over the barriers protecting hands that are pulling it down and knocking away those of the police.

Splitting formations

The tendency for demonstrators to seek safety in numbers sometimes precludes wise tactical decisions. When safety is just as guaranteed with your march split in two, than it would be almost foolish not to split into two shield-wall covered marches that keep in con-tact. Simply put, a shield wall of 1000 people rushing a barricade on a street that is 60 feet wide will probably leave some 800 people standing around not helping because of a lack of space. Your odds improve the more the police are thinned and caught by surprise.

The most effective thing a shield wall can do is confuse authorities as to the intent of the march. To that end having one or more factions split up and take different routes will throw a police operation into disarray. Because the police are restricted to following ranking officers and their commands (at least while maneuvering) if your march splits while the shad-owing police force only has one officer among itself, it cannot break in two to follow both groups.

A shield wall should consider the possibility of splitting up tactically only when there are enough shields. This can be judged knowing if forming a testudo later on might be critical, but if not, than only a few rows of shields and the perimeter and rear groups are needed. A mass of 1000 shields isn't going to be any more effective as a shield wall than 500. Keep in mind if you might end up in an open space like a square or a park where the potential width of your wall may have to grow or your density of shield might be important to defend against flank attacks.

Knowing when to split up also depends on the local situation, but is definitely most effective when trying to breech a perimeter that has multiple entry points. The police work on a system of reserves, sending more officers to points that may be or are in trouble. So if two barricades are rushed simultaneously, the chances of one or both succeeding is significantly higher.

The main question is then, when can you split? A good rule of thumb for safety with a march is that there are enough people to cover slightly more than one city block. This is necessary to prevent being boxed in from two intersections at once. If numbers are double this, than splitting up is not only feasible but a very smart move. Also, keep in mind that the odds of getting boxed in a trap are greatly lessened when there are, say, three marches walking along different streets as the police have far more repositioning to do and are probably spread too thin if they didn't expect your move. Multiple shield walls roaming a city also provide far better coverage for affinity groups that may wish to perform more dangerous operations.

Retreat

So should a situation come to this and the possibility of arrest or extreme caution becomes necessary, it might be time to beat a retreat. Historically, retreating armies suffer the worst losses. The same is true in demonstrations when people break and run in fear. While there is no real practical means of teaching people to avoid this panic, a few cool heads can save the day. The first critical thing a person can do in this situation is to yell "Don't run!" as the first fear should be stampeding other people - a horrible and demoralizing possibility.

The shield wall then in the front-line must act to play rear guard, which can be done by walking backwards at a good pace. If needed, a one-armed shield holder can brace him or herself by gabbing the arm of the person next to them. Calling out with "Hold the line!" may also help in keeping cohesion.

This should also provide physical and visual coverage for those who may have taken "illegal" actions and are a target for police forces. It also will provide grounds for those that find it critical to use projectiles to stem the police onslaught.

This type of situation is the most difficult to maintain cohesion during, but arguably the most important. If individual police officers are allowed into protester lines, they will begin arresting and beating those particulars. A shield wall that is maintained can save scores - but always remain wary of being boxed in at such times.

A scout in the rear can be used to determine which direction the retreat should take as well as to observe when it is safe to stop.

Shield Wall Formations and Tactics

Setting up your formations

The only way to guarantee maximum effectiveness of the variety of shields and body armor employed is that every affinity group uses similar equipment as much as possible. Since rows are set up of one or more affinity groups marching together and it is in no one's interest to break up affinity groups, it would be foolish to have some people in your group arrive with massive shields, and others with just a helmet.

Once converging, everyone participating in shield wall formations can agree among each group as to who goes where. Groups with inner tube or tower shields will be urged to be near the front or at least highly exposed. Remember this isn't a demonstration of heroics - it is a matter of practicality as to which affinity groups are in the front because they are helping to defend the entire march. By visual consensus it should not be hard to deter-mine who should position themselves where, unless certain groups do not feel comfort-able near the front. Remember that DIY equipment is made to be disposable, and swapping equipment might be an important function of solidarity even if you labored for hours on your particular shield.

Formations

Wedge Charge

This method, requiring much coordination is derived from a classic Viking method of charging. It requires a good deal of discipline, not to mention an awful lot of courage on the part of the person in front. This method also requires the space to make for a near running charge to provide maximum disarray and psychological intimidation against opponents.

A wedge will have one or two persons in front, using the two-handed method with as large a shield as possible. The two lines that follow to the right and left of the focal point slightly angle their shields to the outside direction.

Once in position a countdown to a charge should be given and the charge should be made at a quick pace of short steps to keep tight, as full sprinting will lose cohesion. The wedge works by focusing on one point and pressing upon it while the two angled sides deflect forces attempting to aid the one point and widening the breech. It also keeps a degree of cohesion for those attempting to break through. A normal flat line of attack may open a hole in one or two places, but they are difficult to expand upon and to even notice for reinforcements to converge upon.

Another advantage of the wedge is that if a person in the lead is about to be nabbed, there is immediate support behind him or her to pull them back away from arrest. It is then critical to remain close to the person in front of you. A wedge need not be more than 7-11 persons across or about 4 persons deep. Extra bodies can be used to fill the inside of the wedge, and form a solid line behind it - although at the ready to push through the breech.

Pulse charge

This is another method that takes discipline, and planning ahead of time. It probably is too complicated to be considered, but it’s included for the concept anyhow. The pulse, as the name implies is a series of quick and short engagements that are just as quickly broken off. This should work to throw the police off balance and catch them by surprise when the real push is made. If pre-arranged, such that 3 pulses will occur before the real press, then simple shouting commands will work.

The difficulty is being able to disengage - as people behind you may not be aware of your methods. A possible effective manner is to use only one line of shields, having a few people behind to ask the rest of the crowd to wait until the final real charge. Otherwise, this is probably a move too difficult to coordinate.

The Echelon Charge

Similar in effect to the wedge, but easier to set up, the echelon also works in a defensive manner. It is set up such that a given wing of the shield wall is extended ahead, sloping down to the other side of the wing, like the shape of a guillotine blade. Each person stands slightly behind and to the side of the person in front.

The principle behind this tactic is to turn the flank of a cordon of police and execute a breakthrough there. Traditionally, this is done on the right wing of the shield wall, turning the left wing of the police formation and for the sake of preparation, it is a good idea to keep this as a standard - unless the police have caught on of course. To add to the effect of pressing one corner of the opposing line, the weight of added bodies should be added to this side.

In effect, the one edge pushes through on one corner, turning the flank while the other end of the echelon advances enough to keep those police at bay. Hence the weight pushes through one side and the other wing of the police is helpless to come to their aid. This method not only breaks the police line, it also boxes them in to a degree, forcing a very disorganized withdraw on their point. The confusion should be enough to deter the police from pressing your weakened left wing.

Alternately, if an echelon is too difficult to form, a simple straight line with added weight to one side can have a similar effect.

Tortoise or Testudo

The tortoise formation is the essence of the shield wall. Now while typical advancements may only require a front row of shields, the tortoise formation aims to protect both the front and the top from raining projectiles such as tear gas canisters. A tight wall above and in the front can also protect against direct spray items such as pepper spray nozzles and water cannons.

Traditional tortoise formation dictates that the first row of shields lay theirs at ground level while the second row reaches over the shoulders of the first at an angle to double the front protection while then the third and subsequent rows protect the top. Additionally members on the side would protect the flanks if necessary.

As the tortoise was employed for protection against arrows and javelins in antiquity, it is only crucial today in situations of situations where police projectiles are thrown. As it is naturally a slow moving formation, it is not recommended for actions in defense against batons for the loss in visibility in finding gaps among the police lines.

For the purposes here, a formation with one front row of shields and the remainder providing ceiling support should suffice. As moving fast invariable develops cracks in the formation, move to a slow rhythm or the chant of "1, 2, 1, 2..." A tactical objective of the Tortoise is to get close enough to police rounds to render projectile weapons ineffective. This will relieve protesters in the rear of the need for flight.

Immediately once contact is made with the police lines, the tortoise should break into supportive rows of frontal shields aimed at defending each other against baton blows.

Square

This defensive tactic, or a loose derivative of it should be employed when you have a single position to defend against imminent attack, and your numbers are rather small. This can arise typically when trying to block the path of vehicles in a spontaneous move.

The traditional square was a formation the British Imperial armies would use to defend from massed cavalry attacks. For our purposes, it works to prevent or at least pro-long arrest even when surrounded or when injecting yourselves into a compromise-able position.

The square is simply set to face around a point with your shields out. As you are immobile, kneeling will provide a smaller space for the police to try to crack. In reality, you will probably end up with more of a circular formation than an actual square, but the idea is the same. And if you happen to find a stockpile of muskets, what the hell, have a go at it.

Extreme self-defense tactics

When facing an opposing force that is hell bent on breaking laws and violating your rights by viciously attacking you, any code of self-defense allows for extreme measures. By this we mean to include the throwing of projectiles and use of bludgeon weapons which serve to distract and disorientate the opposition so that the demonstrators might regroup or escape.

While injury to others is never a facet to embrace in self-defense, we must recognize this possibility as it has happened in the past, and will probably occur again. If the police are prepared for the worst, so should we. While this is not the place for a moral treatise, the general philosophy is that we are fighting for life and freedom, and so long as we don't fight for death and oppression as our enemies do, we have moral fortitude on our side.

Grease guns, smoke and paint bombs and other items don't necessarily injure and also can provide tactical advantages in disorientating the police. But, as this is a booklet concerning self-defense tactics, we won't get into specifics on more aggressive street fighting manners. And hey, how much do you need to know about throwing a brick?

[From "Bodyhammer: Tactics and Self-Defense for the Modern Protester" by Sarin http://www.devo.com/sarin/shieldbook.pdf]

* * *

Monkeywrenching

Planning and Executing a Hit
From Ozymandias' Sabotage Handbook
http://burn.ucsd.edu/~unalucha/vl1sc03.htm

Coordination vs. mindless vandalism

It is necessary to make the distinction between a eco-sabotage 'hit' and vandalism. A hit is aimed at a specific site, for a specific reason - sometimes you may only be hitting one part of a large site. Vandalism on the other hand is a frenzy of activity which gives no thought to the purpose for which it is being carried out.

The main factor in a 'hit' is the minimization of risk to yourselves, and other human beings/animals involved on that site. The hit should not leave traps or damage which might cause someone to be harmed. It should not cause uncontrolled pollution of the environment. Note here the use of the word uncontrolled, since a hit may involve small amounts of pollution through the spilling of fuel, hydraulic fluid, and the generation of large quantities of waste equipment. You must be aware of this fact and plan to minimize pollution - for example, the uncontrolled release of oil or fuel may mean that fuel enters storm drains, or is washed by the rain, ultimately ending up as a huge slick in the local river.

A good hit does not happen out of the blue (or, at least, rarely). Planning is essential for three reasons...

It means you know the site, know what is involved, and you can get in and out with as little trouble as possible;
You know what equipment to take with you - an essential consideration since the lots of the wrong equipment will not get you very far, whereas a little of the right equipment can enable you to cause havoc;
It stops you getting caught! As well as planning on site to avoid security/staff, you should plan your entry, getaway and alibis to ensure that you will never be associated with the incident.

Selecting a site

Primarily, you should always have a justifiable reason for what you are doing. In practice, an earth mover working to build a children's playground does not pose a problem, but an earth mover working on a road project that destroys the countryside does.

You must consider, add appropriate weight to the material considerations, and then ultimately justify any act you propose to carry out.

Viable targets

You must select the target, taking into account the threat it poses. The response should then be in proportion to this threat. If a farmer is deliberately destroying a wildlife site then the proportionate action would be to take out those pieces of equipment that the work is being done with - what would not be justifiable would be burning down the whole barn with the equipment in.

There is also the idea of 'escalation'. The harder you hit a site, the more action the operator is going to take to protect the equipment. This means that it is more difficult to do a properly directed hit and you may have to resort to indiscriminate means of action such as fire, taking out power supplies, etc. Always have a thought out plan for what will happen if you do not succeed in stopping the action first time - do not needlessly escalate the conflict.

Finally, the hit should be justifiable to the public at large - as ultimately they are the people who will pass judgment. It does not matter what the police or the site owner think - if somebody is doing something perceived by the public as 'bad', then your taking action will secure public support. Indiscriminate action that causes pollution, harm to people, animals or the wider countryside will not receive general acceptance.

Collective or individual operations

Next you must decide how you plan to hit the site. Can it be done by yourself alone (my preference - I don't like incriminating others), or will you need help?

If you decide that others will be involved this sets up certain problems. For example, who makes decisions? Who takes on what task? If one person is caught, what do the others do? All these matters need to be resolved before you hit the site.

One-off or attrition hits

Finally, you must decide what your hit is designed to achieve, and what will happen in the future. There are three key considerations...

l How many chances will you get to hit the site? If there is little security you will be able to take out equipment with few considerations about getting caught. However, you will probably not get the same chance again.

l Next, are you trying to close the place down, or just remove the offending problem? This will determine the weight of your response.

l Finally, is the objective best achieved by a one-off super destructive hit where you take out the entire site, or would nibbling away here and there over a period of time achieve a better result?

Having decided what the priority is, you should plan accordingly.

Reconnaissance

Reconnaissance is essential. It is what enables you to get into, move around, and get out of a site without getting lost, hurt or caught. It also enables you to assess the needs of the hit in terms of equipment.

Maps

Maps are important - mainly in getting on and off the site. As well as having one way in, it is a good idea to have more than one way out. For example, where a site is close to a river, a railway line and a main road, which is the safest means of access? These factors can be assessed from the map, and then tested/observed on the ground before the hit.

The maps I use most are the 1:25,000 scale 'Pathfinder' Ordnance Survey maps. These provide details of the land in the area, field boundaries, roads, footpaths, and any nearby buildings.

There are two ways to get a map of the site:

1) Ordnance Survey, at a HMSO and specialist map shops around the country, print up to date digital maps at 1:10,000 or 1:1,000 scale, showing the most recent information on a site. These maps cost around £40. The 1:10,000 maps, and sometimes the 1:1,000 maps can also be found in many local libraries, but they tend to be a few years out of date.

2) At some point someone must have applied for planning permission for the site. The planning permission, together with detailed site maps, building drawings and details of any plant on site are kept on 'public registers' with the local planning authority - normally the District council. However, care must be exercised or someone may connect

a hippy inspecting the planning file one week, with the destruction of that site the next.

Photographs

If few details are available about the site from maps or planning permissions, the next best option is to get some photographs. One warning about this - never get the photographs developed by a postal service, and if you take them to a shop, never take them to a shop near the site you intend to hit.

Also, once you have planned the hit, get rid of the photos the day before you carry the hit out. Never dump the photos in the rubbish - either dispose of them elsewhere or keep them in your stash (if you keep them in the stash, wipe off any finger prints first).

Activity schedules

Where the site is part of a business, or someone lives there, you should watch the place for a week or two to get an idea of when people come and go. Even on a site which is continually occupied, there may be a window of opportunity when you can get in, carry out the hit, and get out again.

Also, if the hit is dependent upon the presence of particular equipment or goods, keeping a watch will allow you to plan the hit for when the target is there.

Security details

When carrying out reconnaissance, never barge up to the perimeter fence and start taking photos! Approach any site with caution. Check for the presence of alarm systems, closed circuit TV (CCTV) cameras, security patrols, guard dogs, or even infrared/microwave motion detectors mounted in the open ground or inside buildings. If you discover any security precautions, you will have to find a way to bypass these systems.

You should also be aware that there is increasing use of CCTV in towns across the UK. If you have to drive or walk through an area with CCTV to reach the target, then they only have to check the tapes to get your mugshot/car registration.

Also, because of the threat of sabotage, it is possible that equipment may be alarmed - equipment similar to car alarms is relatively simple to fit to earth movers, and fitting building security systems to a barn or equipment compound is not that difficult. As a general precaution the first thing I do when confronted with an earth mover is check for alarms. I disconnect any horns or sirens first before doing anything else. Even then, use caution when working. Things which have easy external access are unlikely to be alarmed - but lift the bonnet and all hell could break loose. Even when things have been alarmed there are ways around the problem - filling the alarm siren full of mastic for example.

Planning

If anything goes wrong - if security guards or the police turn up, if you set off all the alarm systems, or if you hurt yourself and need the quickest route out - it is planning the hit that will save you from ultimate imprisonment and the curtailing of your sabotage career. The planning process can be broken down into a number of simple topics or stages. In effect this section reproduces what goes through my mind when I plan any hit.

Access/Escape

Selecting your means of access and exit is as important as the sabotage itself. You may need to get into somewhere avoiding security cameras or floodlighting. To get out you may need to chop through fences.

If possible I prefer to have different routes of access and exit - this is sensible because if your means of access is discovered, a hole in the fence for example, then it does not preclude your planned means of escape.

Don't just plan the access and exit to the site itself either - plan the whole route from the point where you leave your transport through to where you are picked up again. Sometimes it is better to walk three miles across country rather than have to drive a car down the road running to the site.

As well as your means of access and escape, if anything goes wrong you will need to ensure an alternative route. For example, one site I hit had a railway on one side and a river down the other, but only one road running to the site itself. Had the road been blocked it would have been easy to just run down the railway track, or even just jump in the river and float away.

If you can get someone to drop you off, it is always better if you can be picked up somewhere else so as not to attract attention. If you have to rely on yourself for transport you will need to ensure that your car/bike is not visible - it may even be worth investing in some camouflage netting from your local army surplus store if there is a lack of natural cover.

Staffing/Security

If there are staff on site you will have problems. If the guards just sit in their hut, never walk around and do not have CCTV, you can get in, do the biz and get out fairly easily - you will just have to adapt your methods to be silent.

The problem normally arises when you are not aware that people are there, until you are confronted by them. You should have picked up the likelihood of staff being on site when you carried out your initial reconnaissance - but sometimes things happen as you expect them to.

If confronted by someone - just leg it. Don't provoke a confrontation. Any sensible person would not chase someone who was carrying a hammer or crowbar. If you are cornered, just give up - resistance will count against you in court.

It is possible to plan alternatives where staff are on site. You can arrange a distraction - though this will not give you very long to work. Alternately you could use the 'cry wolf' approach. You keep cutting holes in the fence and setting off alarms for a few weeks, but not actually entering the site. Over this time the staff will become tired of the incidents, and will not treat it seriously. Then, one night, you actually do do something.

If all else fails, and you are sure that you must carry out the hit, you can passively neutralize the staff. This approach only really works with trailers, booths, and guard shacks.

While the staff are inside, block the doors and cut the phone/electricity cables. Then, while confusion reigns in the cabin and they haven't sussed that breaking the windows is the only way out, do the hit. If you block someone inside where there is no possible means of escape, always phone the police straight away to release them when you've got out.

Equipment

As part of your reconnaissance you should get as much detail as possible of the equipment on site, and its design and construction, in order to assess your tooling needs. You could turn up with the standard kit, outlined earlier, but if you can tailor your tooling resources to the equipment concerned, you will get a better result.

Entry

Getting into the site is very important - particularly if there are people around. You may need to devise a way of getting in which does not attract attention - particularly if you want to use the same route out again.

When scoping a site for entry I have a few basic tactics:

Fences: Go through them, not over them - if you have bolt cutters it won't take any longer, and there is less risk of being spotted. (Tip - with chain link fences, just cut the same thread of wire in the fence top, bottom, and three or four places in between, then pull out the wire with your pliers. The fence will then just fall into two.)

Roads: Try and keep off them. If there are hedges or walls, travel behind them
until you get to the site.

Walls: Not much option but to go over - in which case you may need extra
equipment. I would not rely on exiting over a wall, just in case someone takes your
ladder away.

Ditches/rivers: These can provide good cover, so long as they have a dry bank. If
you can, cross the water coming in - it's always better to work dry. If you have to
you can always splash through on your way out.

Gates: If the gate is not locked - fine. If it is, you'll need bolt cutters to get the
padlock off. If possible try and get a padlock which looks the same so that you can
remove it on your way out without problems. Never leave a cut padlock in view -
it's a sure sign to a passing policeman that someone's inside.

Doors: Doors are problematic. They are very easy things to alarm, either with
mechanical micro-switches or magnetic reed switches. If in doubt, you may
always try going through the door itself, but the cutting operations will be noisy.

Open concrete yards/grass: I avoid any open area, especially around factories/offices. Open areas are perfect for using CCTV to pick people up. Another example of open areas to avoid are power stations. Most power stations have clear paths cut through the undergrowth around them. This is because specialised microwave beams run down the avenues, and will sound an alarm when broken by anything more than 2 feet tall.

You will have to consider the options for your own site and work accordingly.

Workplan and timing

I always stick to a work plan. I calculate how long it will take to travel to the point of access; enter the site; travel within the site; sabotage each piece of equipment; exit the site; and travel back to my transport. I also work an order in which to hit each thing, taking into account problems such as being seen, setting off alarms, accommodating staff movements. This may seem unduly rigid, but it is a very effective way of disciplining yourself to do what you came to do, and get out. Also, where considerations such as police patrols, staff change-overs, or covering yourself with an alibi are concerned, timing is essential.

After some practice you will be able to look at the equipment you want to take out and for each one estimate the time to complete the work. Alternatively, if all the equipment is the same (e.g., all the hits are on earth movers), think of a reasonable time and multiply it by the number of hits. Work out the whole programme of events in your mind, and rehearse it in your head for a few days before the event. Then, when you get inside, you won't have to waste time thinking about what to do.

A key consideration in the workplan, if not working alone, is when you are due to be picked up by your transport. When working with others, if I give a precise time to be picked up, and I will ensure that, to the second, I am there. If, for example, travelling into the site takes longer than you anticipate, you should assume your trip out takes long too, and deduct time from your work allocation. Never let your transport sit around, or endlessly circle past waiting for you - it attracts attention. If possible, always arrange a place where you can wait for your transport without being seen, then you will not have to worry if you arrive early.

Special considerations

"The best laid plans of mice and men...." - there is always something you didn't think of. You have to take this into account. Give thought to what happens if you lose a screwdriver, or what happens if the thing you want to hit is not there.

In terms of planning, the biggest consideration must be how you use the time – and how the availability of it affects your use of tools. If you were planting incendiary devices, you want them all to go off at the same time. Likewise, if you are relying on staff using the equipment as normal in the morning to give your work, e.g. abrasives in the sump, time to work, then you will need to cover your work. This all takes extra time.

Consider also situations which may assist/prevent the hit. For example noise may be a prime consideration, but if you hit in the middle of a heavy rain storm, the noise of the wind and falling rain may cover the noise you make. Likewise, the hit may require travelling long distances cross-country to reach the site, which is best done under a full moon. But if it is cloudy that night, you may have to abort - perhaps until the next full moon. The best way to take problems and setbacks into consideration is to allocate extra time in your workplan.

Execution - an example

The plan on the following page shows an area of quarries near the Peak District. Let's assume for the moment that the site needs to be hit because of the damage that it causes to a nearby wildlife site. How do we go about making a detailed workplan of how to carry out the hit?

The following sections take you through the process of planning, in essence, "the perfect crime". It may sound an elaborate, or excessive procedure to follow but unless you consider all the options, at some time, you are more likely to get caught.

Figure 50: Example of target

Conceptualization

Conceptualization is all about visualizing the task in your head, and finding ways to solve it. The best place to start is to actually visit the site, or check it out on a map, and then check your solutions later when you recon the site.

The map above of the site to be hit presents a number of problems and opportunities...

1. Access is not easy because all roads to the site pass the village (marked 'V');

2. There is, because of the quarry faces, restricted access to the inside of the quarry;

3. The best drop-off and pick-up points are half a mile away, with a cross-country route in between;

4. Reconnaissance will be easy because of the presence of many rights of way, the best of which runs from point 'X' to point 'Y' and 'Z', giving views over the quarry;

5. In an emergency, assuming that the police or public are alerted, it may not be possible to get back to the pick-up point;

6. The quarry equipment is based at two areas within the quarry (marked H1 and H2).

In considering the problem, we must characterize all these key features of the hit, and produce appropriate responses to each.

Feasibility study

In considering if the hit is feasible, I would consider matters such as 'will the hit achieve the required result?', as well as the more conventional 'can I do it?' questions.

If you can justify the action, and if, when considering the key problems/opportunities the site presents you can come up with realistic solutions to the problem, then you can carry on to the next stage.

Reconnaissance

Having considered the problems, and thought up solutions, reconnaissance will tell you if your solutions will work. It will also give you essential information as to the layout of the facilities you want to hit, what tooling will be required, and an idea of the timings involved for the workplan.

For me, a proper recon. consists of the following things...

Checking access/exit routes: You must check that what you planned on the map
can be achieved on the ground. The best way to do this is to walk the route - if this
can be done without arousing suspicion. It will also enable you to familiarise
yourself with the route if you have to do it in the dark. On the plan, the proposed
access/exit routes from A1/A2, and to E and EE, should be checked. You can then
select the best way in, and the options to get out.

Mapping the site: You must familiarise yourself with the layout of the site. Sketch
plans, take photos, and memorise a picture of the site in your head. There are also
other sources of information you can access. 1:10,000 scale maps will give you
detail about the position of buildings, and the planning permission or waste
licenses held by your local authority will contain plans detailing not only the

location of buildings, but also the layout of rooms inside the building, the location of drainage pipes, services, and perhaps even an identification of what each building is for. Use of council documents is especially useful when you have no way of directly scoping the site. Considering the plan, you should identify the locations, H1 and H2, and the ways to travel between these points and the access/entry.

Target identification: List all the equipment on the site relevant to the issue you are disagreeing with. Note its position, what it is, any key features such as the position of power supplies, generators, motors, engines, cooling water supplies, fuel tanks, etc. Mobile equipment such as earth movers are more simple to deal with than fixed plant because they are generally built to similar standards.
Considering the plan, the easiest thing would be to take photos of the equipment at H1 and H2 for close study later.

Identification of routes around the site: Having identified access, exit, and position of the hit(s), find easy routes between these points within the site, avoiding any problems such as holes, floodlights, CCTV poles, etc.

Identification of potential hazards: In practice, this means identifying the things that will get you caught. You will need to confirm the hours of operation so that no one will be there when you turn up. If there are people there, you will need to observe their movements to find out if there is the opportunity to carry out the hit. Finally, you will have to consider other human related problems such as the view from nearby properties, the presence of police patrols, and the likelihood of meeting someone on your way to or from the site. You should also conduct a thorough check for CCTV systems, security systems, and any indication that the equipment you want to hit is alarmed. Considering the plan, you should check the ease of access/exit, particularly on the route to EE. You would also need to assess the problems posed by the proximity to the village, V, and nearby residences.

Commitment/Abort Procedure: What are you going to do if you can't carry out the hit? You will need to plan a route to the pick-up point, and you may have to find somewhere to hide while you are waiting. Considering the plan, the simplest thing would be to give up at the boundary of the site, follow the road to point X, and then head for E to wait for pick-up, or to EE via Y to the alternate pick-up.

Bringing all this data together will give you your working plan.

Mapping out your workplan

When you have the results of your recon, start mapping out your workplan. First, work out how much time you need to do the hit on each piece of equipment, and what tooling you will need. Then, taking into account travel times, work out how long you will be inside the site. Finally, work out how long it will take to get to and from your transport. This will give you the total time the hit will take, and you will be able to plan schedules with your associates and your alibis accordingly.

Just in case of incident, you should also plan an alternative route out. Always assume when planning this route that someone is after you, or that you have injured yourself. If you are relying on someone else for transport, you will also need to arrange another pick-up point, and a time to be there. Realistically the pick up will need to be some distance from the site, or you will have to consider finding your own way home cross-country.

Getting there

As noted above, you must access the site in a way which does not attract attention - especially if you intend to exit the same way.

If you are using your own transport, it will need to be stored while you are away. This relies on two principles - camouflage, or putting it where no one will think it out of place. For example, a single car in a lay-by on the side of the road attracts attention. A car in a pub car park, where there are many others parked, does not.

If you are being dropped off, don't waste time, Have all your plans clear before you get there, arrive, gloves on, and quickly exit the vehicle with your tools.

On the plan, there is a pub in the village. If you were sure of getting back to the pub before closing time you could leave you transport at the pub, and access via A2 - although you might arouse interest if you returned covered in grease and hydraulic fluid. Alternatively, you could be dropped off at A1, getting there without traveling through the village, and return to E (my preference).

Commitment point

Do not proceed with the hit if it is obvious that it cannot be achieved - this is usually when someone is present on the site when you didn't expect it, or the conditions on the site have changed, for example the weather, meaning that the hit cannot take place. In these situations it is essential that you have a way of traveling to the pick-up point, and that you can wait there for your transport. Going back to the plan, you will actually have more than one commitment point. There will be the point at the site boundary, traveling from A1. If problems arose, you simply go down the road to point 'X' and head for point 'E' or 'EE'. However, because there are two hit points, 'H1' and 'H2', separated by a great distance, you should assess each one independently and act accordingly.

Working

The benefit of having a plan of work is that you don't waste time on site. You know where to go, you know what to hit and what tools you have to do the job. If there is more than one of you, you should also work out specific responsibilities for working. If you must abandon the workplan, then by necessity, this should entail aborting the whole hit.

When things go wrong

If your planning work was conducted well, things should not go wrong. Things only go wrong because you did not consider them during the planning stage, or they were not anticipated. If things go wrong, don't hang around, make for the exit. If necessary, because the exit route is not available, use your alternative. If you are injured, there are various options. If alone, you should try and make it out straight away, but if this is not possible, accept defeat, and raise the alarm/find help. If there is more than one of you then there is always the possibility of help. If you are cornered, or caught, give in – they probably have a reasonable identification for you by then anyway.

Leaving

Leave as planned. If you have to use another route out, use your alternative. If you abandon your plan you risk getting lost, trapped, or seen by people/guards/police/CCTV. The only time to abandon your exit route is when there is no alternative because you are being pursued. Under normal circumstances, return to your transport. If you have planned accordingly, you should turn up a few minutes early and have somewhere to wait out of view. It is also a good idea to have some soap and water so that you can wash off any identifying dirt and grease. It is also a good idea to change your footwear before getting your pick-up, or if there is no time, put some plastic carrier bags around your feet to prevent incriminating dirt/soil getting inside the vehicle.

Afterwards

If possible, do not go home immediately. Go to your stash and dump your tools. You should also consider changing clothes and footwear and leaving it there too. You should also wash off if you haven't done so already. If you have any containers or rubbish, try and get rid of them, or leave them in your stash - don't take anything home. Then, go home, relax, or better still, party!

Alibis

The prime motive in planning a hit is to avoid detection and capture, and having done that, hiding all the incriminating evidence which may associate you with the incident. This will often be enough since if the hit was small, the site operator may not report it (in fact, it may be in their interest not to regularly report things because it gives them adverse publicity, and may increase their insurance premiums).

However, in cases where you can expect lots of trouble afterward, you should consider arranging an alibi. There are a number of options...

Get a friend to stay in your home and make a long phone call (so that it is logged
on your billing record) to another friend - the other friend then states that the call
was from you, and the phone company record of calls kept at the exchange confirms the date
and time of the call;

If you have an account with a computer bulletin board system, get a friend to stay

in your house, give them your password, and let them use it for a couple of hours.
Then you will have a log with phone company and the BBS system of your line usage, and
because the password is private, it is a good excuse that no one else used it;

Arrange a party with your friends - all of whom must agree to state you were at the
party the whole time;

Record the evening's TV on video, or radio on a tape - then memorize it all the
instant you get home. When questioned about what you did on your evening in
you can quote your evening TV/radio usage accurately.

NB: It is also not a good idea to keep this book in your house for a few weeks after a hit - in itself it could be incriminating!!

Return visits

From experience, you will have an irresistible urge to go back and view your damage the next day when it has been discovered - try and avoid doing this. Unless you hit on a main road or the side of a railway line (so you can view as you travel by), or within view of a well used public building which you have legitimate business being in, going back to the site will only draw attention to yourself.

The same goes for a 'return hit'. Let the heat die down - for a week at least. Unless it is absolutely necessary I would not return to hit the site again until one or two months later, or I had evidence from other sources, unconnected with the original hit, that things had calmed down.

Even then, be cautious. You should also recon. the site before hitting again to be certain that no new security systems have been established, and that work patterns have not changed.

[http://burn.ucsd.edu/~unalucha/sabotage1.htm]

The Nighttime Gardener (GE Crop Destruction)
http://www.tao.ca/~ban/1299nighttimegardener.htm

Evening Attire for The Nighttime Gardener

Gardening is a very dirty job. For the least hassle it is recommended to wear a complete set of old clothes that can easily be discarded in dumpsters after gardening. Don#t be cheap. It's really necessary, even if like us, you hate wasting anything. Black evening attire is the most appropriate for shy gardeners. You may get very wet and cold, so wear appropriate cold-weather and rain gear. Have some comfortable clean clothes and shoes to change into before you get home.

A forensic scientist can tell roughly where you've been from the composition of the dirt and soil that you will have picked up on your travels. Say, for instance, you've been gardening at a Monsanto test site of GE corn, then traces of earth will be upon you, as will traces of plant life, such as pollen that you may have brushed against.

These traces are used to put you at a certain place, and in some instances, at a certain time. Once again, it is best to dispose of any gardening clothing. i.e. give up your attachment to your clothes! And before you leave for the action, empty your pockets and don't bring along anything (even to leave in a vehicle) you don't need and wouldn't want to see in court.

On soft surfaces, such as mud, earth, dog shit, etc., shoe impressions will be left behind. From these marks identification can be made. The only sensible thing to do is to wear old shoes and to throw them a long way away immediately afterwards. Shoes (and clothes) will also carry traces away with them, such as oil, gas, glass splinters and other such gardening giveaways. Don't wear them in your vehicle or in your home. When gardening in urban areas, consider the impact that you may have on a passer-by wearing all black from head to toe. Wearing inconspicuous clothes such as dark pants and a hooded sweatshirt may serve the purpose.

Make sure you don't have activist bumper stickers on your action vehicle. A "Smash The State" sticker may narrow down the pool of suspects.

Gardening just after a spraying of RoundUp, Liberty or other toxic herbicides may pose a grave threat to the health-conscious gardener Gore-Tex or rubber rain gear (cheaply purchased or easily stolen from Wal-Mart) as well as medical masks, and chemical-protective gloves (Home Depot, etc.) are necessary. It is possible to find out from county extension offices whether or not there is a particular timing for spraying of certain local crops. Particularly sensitive gardeners may want to hit the phone comany or other pest-resistant crops rather than Roundup-

Ready/Liberty Link (herbicide tolerant) crops. It is more likely that commercial GE. crops (those grown for market) will be sprayed. Be careful!

The Nighttime Gardener's Toolbox

The tools you use for gardening will vary, but for some crops you won't need any at all. Your hands in good work gloves (for fingerprint guard and protection) will do just fine. Gardening without tools is great when the crops are easy enough to rip up by hand because you'll have less weight to carry, and less gear to accidentally leave at the site or get nabbed with. Night gardeners have had success with rolling their bodies over the crops as well, but this may only bend certain crops at certain ages, instead of damaging them beyond repair.

However, some GE crops (older trees, for example) are nearly impossible to take out without tools. Some people like to use saws, scythes, machetes, hoes, shears, or other gardening tools, but it's really a personal preference. Think simple and streamlined. Ever try to carry a machete over barbed wire? Not easy! They can sometimes be too much trouble, too time consuming, or difficult to part with after gardening. One group reported that a long metal pole pushed across one or two rows of corn (dubbed the California Corn Cutter") worked well for quick, convenient, and energy-efficient gardening. Be creative. Practice beforehand if you are using any fancy methods.

Bolt cutters are good for getting through locked gates or into greenhouses. Another technique for gaining access into glass greenhouses is to duck tape a square one could crawl through, and then punch it in. The tape will muffle sound by absorbing the blow and keeping the glass from scattering all over the ground. There are also hand-held, manual, spring-loaded punches which paramedics use to break glass on car windows that work very well. Corrugated plastic greenhouses can be cut into with a sharp knife as well.

Another tool for rows of some crops is a strong board with holes in both ends through which a rope is strung. The board is placed on the ground, and then the gardener puts a foot on top of it and lifts up the rope to a comfortable waist height. Then, the gardener can go step by step stomping down the crops, and avoid stooping or kneeling on the ground, which can easily get very tiring.

Lots of tactics have been created since the need for nighttime gardening came about to survive in this modern (biotech) world. If not properly handled, some tools can also be a serious safety issue.

If you do use any tools, make sure they are cleaned of all fingerprints before taken on site. A good way to clear up those pesky fingerprints is with warm, soapy water. In a time-crunch, extensive rubbing with cloth can be satisfactory. Be thorough: even the batteries inside a flashlight have been touched, and you wouldn't want to drop anything while you were out and about!

On the subject of dropping things, it's easy to lose things such as jewelry and glasses when working hard in the garden, so take them off beforehand or make sure they are secure. If something is dropped (especially a hat with hair stuck to it) it might be a good idea to go back and get it if it's not too sketch.

Entry and exit of the site is often the most risky aspect of nighttime excursions. If you need to use a vehicle, it's worth parking away from your gardening and walking in, as tires leave those horrible distinctive marks and can accumulate soils that are easily identified. Leave someone with your vehicle, as there can be unexpected people about, and make sure the driver has a reason to be where s/he is. A pair of people making out can be a good excuse, or a problem getting the car started. Better yet, have a driver who can quickly pick you up when done gardening. The driver might need to come around at several different times before the final pick-up in order to make sure the gardening is going well. Set up an interval of time (such as 15 minutes) for the driver to wait and come around again if nobody's at the pick-up site. This way if you're running late, you don't miss your only chance for a pick-up.

If the site is located in a residential neighborhood, a drop-off may look suspicious. Therefore, it may be appropriate to have two different pick-up and drop-off points, and possibly alternate sites as well if access is cut off in one place. It is also essential to plan an emergency pick-up time/place where a crew can run to and hide all night if they are detected and the cops are crawling around the neighborhood.

When you're waiting by the road for a car, you can't make out what kind of vehicle it is until the last second because of the headlight glare. One technique is to leave some distinctive marker, such as a bag of trash (not yours) or a can at certain place by the road. When the driver comes by, if the marker is no longer there, s/he knows to pull over and pick up the crew. Another method is for the driver to flash a turn signal during the approach if there is clearly no place a regular vehicle would be turning, and that way the crew can identify their ride to safety. Lastly and best of all, get radios (see below).

Remember when you get home to vacuum and clean the whole car. Oh, and get rid of your directions, too!

For a smooth night of gardening it is best to bring along a reliable set of radios and a scanner. Remove all serial numbers on the radios, and make sure you purchase them discreetly and with cash. Ear pieces work best while gardening because they free up your hands. Check everything thoroughly before you leave, wipe them down, and have extra batteries. You can then be in communication with your driver (and other gardeners) and they can alert you to any possible disturbances.

The Best Time To Go

The best gardening time for the shy gardener is obviously at night. And at the new moon is better than when it is full. You have two main choices: early a.m. is quite dead, but remember how long the job will take, starting earlier in the evening will give you more of an excuse to be out and about. Try and start at a time that provides you with enough time to garden thoroughly for the specific site and have a buffer for the drop-offs/pick-ups if they take longer than expected, which is common. Agricultural areas or neighborhood garden plots can be a busy place as farmers usually get an early start on the day, sometimes before dawn. At this time a flash-beam or light of any sort will draw attention. Cover flashlights with blue or red saran wrap, tinted tape, or a gel to filter the stark white light into something more subtle.

It is worth bearing in mind that when it's raining hard it will wash away most traces and provide visual and audio cover. You'll often get drenched from the dew alone. It is a good idea to scout your site of interest at many different times throughout the day/night to get a clear idea of what the scene is like.

An all-night recon is a really good idea to make sure the garden is right for you. There may be cameras at university test sites/greenhouses or biotech corporation labs/sites/greenhouses. For the main part, these cameras serve to deter potential "gardeners," and instill a healthy sense of paranoia. Paranoia, Nah! Those who are careful stay free!

How To Spot Your Crop

Firstly, the timing of your harvest is important if you want to actually sabotage their research and cause economic damage. Too early could let them replant, and too late could harvest their crop for them! Just before flowering obviously prevents the mutant genes from escaping through the plant's pollen, and if you can't get it by then, you can cut down the plant before the seeds are fully developed. Don't just harvest the beans or corncob either, harvest the whole plant from the stalk/stems, or better yet, pull it right up out of the ground. A slick trick would be to bag up some of the offending matter and leave it on the doorstep of the facility, or on your local USDA or State Ag. Dept.'s doorstep!

It's important to research WHAT you are targeting and WHO. Considering how pervasive commercial GE crops are, it's a good idea to target research, both at universities and corporate facilities (is there really any difference??). Industry links up with local farmers as "co-operators" to grow seed and test varieties in their fields, often in return for advertising their more impressive trials with big signs advertising the company and the variety. Oftentimes you may see signs for a certain company's seed trials in a field that is obviously belonging to a small farmer (there may be a house and driveway and family-type items around the yard). Targeting these types of sites will likely bring into question the intentions of night gardeners and may confuse the message of opposing the Ag-Biotech industry by targeting already desperate farmers.

On occasion you may be able to identify a commercial crop that is being grown specifically for a company, or on Agribusiness farmland where no family is present. You can sometimes find these type of sites by checking out property maps ("Plats") at the County tax assessor's office in the County Building closest to your target crop (or the local library, but they often don't have current maps), or through the LEXUS property records database at your local library.

This is also a good process for locating corporate facilities not listed in the phone book (or on www.yellowpages.net). If you know the address of a facility or a plot of fields, a quick search on the county assessor's web site will tell you the value of the property, the acreage, and possibly the types of structures on the site.

The basic reality is that commercial GE crops cover 20 million acres of American farmland, and attacking random commercial fields is simply not strategic, especially when there are so many better research targets. If a research project is "nipped in the bud," so to speak, it may never make it to the commercial market!

For example, the same colorful signs that hug the backroads are often posted in the same fashion in front of rows of research crops at corporate facilities, often boasting the "Roundup Ready" or "YIELDGUARD" trait, depending on the company. Bt crops are often listed on signs by a certain variety number ending in Bt. Corn and Soybeans are the most common GE crops, both commercially and in research. But at universities, one might also see a wide variety of GE crops including sunflowers, alfalfa, and wheat.

A helpful, but not infallible, tool for zeroing in on your target crop is the U.S. government database Field Trials listed through the USDA/APHIS web site. You can request searches of current trial notifications and permits as well as registered trials by state, crop, institution or phenotype (GE trait). The results will tell you the states these trials are being performed in, the acreage of the trial, and a contact person, usually a company researcher, for information.

What To Do When You Get There

Obviously the number of people you need will depend on the size of the GE site. Most sites can be done quite happily with 2-4 gardeners. The actual work could be 1 hour, or it could be all night. For larger sites you may need many gardeners, but it's harder to avoid detection in larger numbers. Again, make sure you're suitably dressed and scout out the site extensively, including in/out routes and an emergency escape plan/meeting place if things go awry. The group should decide what to do if confronted with an angry farmer. Instead of everyone scattering on their own, we strongly recommend sticking together as a group, at least at first, and then making a call to scatter if necessary.

Remember, a well-placed sheet over a camera can have a rather numbing effect on their security. A well-placed kick or spray paint shot over the lens can do the same.

The goal is to destroy the plants: you will either have to snap them off at the stem, or when uprooted pull them apart at times. At a release site in East Anglia (England), sugar beet was uprooted and left lying on the site. It was later replanted by the farmer (and later still, dug up by concerned gardeners and removed from the site). In 1987, the Strawberry Liberation Front in the U.S. pulled up a crop of strawberries that were to be sprayed with ice-minus bacteria. For the photo opportunity the next day, the scientist placed the strawberries back in the holes from which they'd been pulled.

Remember, the test sites are experiments (with our future). If your aim is to disrupt this misguided experiment then you may not need to destroy all of the crop. Destroying 50-75% of the research plants will call into question any data collected. It will also disrupt the experiment if all the markers and identification tags are scattered around or taken, but be safe. Don#t stick them in your closet. Make the garden messy, and it is less likely to be considered salvageable. Scattering bags and bags of organic or non/GE seeds can also ruin a test site and spread a little bit of consciousness as well. A good idea is to scatter seed in the beginning of the season and not issue a communiqué about it until a month later. By that time, your seeds have wreaked havoc on the GE varieties.

Don't forget to target irrigation equipment, greenhouses, solar thermometers and the like. Groups such as Reclaim The Seeds and the Future Farmers have sabotaged thousands of dollars of this sort of equipment in different actions. It is suggested that computers, data files, clipboards with research information, and other documentation should be removed for our own research, or quietly destroyed.

What You Will Be Gardening

Canola (Oilseed Rape)

There are two different breeds of canola that you might be gardening, winter and spring. The spring crop is sown mid March and April, and harvested late September to mid October. The winter crop is sown late August to mid September, flowering during May and is harvested mid July - mid August.

The plant has erect branching stems up to three feet high bearing deep-lobed, grass green, bristly lower leaves and lobed blue upper leaves, with distinctive yellow flowers. It may be harvested early by breaking the stalk of the plant. This can be achieved by holding a large disposable stick outstretched and falling onto a row of the crop. The California Corn Cutter is used the same way.

Corn (Maize)

Corn is usually sown in late March early April and is harvested from July onward, depending on the region. It has a single main stem with irregular long thin drooping leaves. It can be harvested in the same way as canola. A good snap is enough to finish off the corn plant. Tomatoes

This crop is usually sown in seedbeds at the end of winter and then transplanted to the test fields between late March and early April. It is then harvested between mid-July and early September. They have a main stem with branches. Each branch produces a green fruit that turn red with ripening. To harvest early, pull or dig up the plant and snap the main stem.

Wheat

Winter wheat is sown between late September and early October. Summer wheat is sown in early March and harvested in August or September. When young it is difficult to distinguish from barley, both of which look like large-leafed grasses, but as they grow you can see that wheat has a much larger head. To harvest when young, pull up, if older use a "grass hook" (a type of crescent shaped knife). Barley

Spring barley is sown February to March and harvested mid-May to mid-August. The winter crop is sown September to October and harvested July to August. Garden the same as wheat.

Sugar Beet

This crop is sown in seedbeds in late February and then transplanted to the fields between late March and late April, and is then harvested in early November.

It has a whitish conical root that produces a lot of stems each with a single irregular green, lobed leaf as well as a garland of flowers. It can be harvested early by pulling or digging up the crop and removing the root bit from the leaves and scattering in opposite directions.

Potato

There are lots of varieties of GE potatoes grown in North Amerika, many of which would be appropriate to garden. The description and the growing times of the plants will depend on the variety, but generally potato plants look like straggly tomato plants with either small yellow flowers or small green flowers. To harvest early, pull or dig up the plant and snap the main stem and pull apart or smash the root.

GE Forestry

Weyerhaeuser, International Paper, Westvaco, and Boise Cascade, among others, are working in conjunction with the oil industry ($hell) and universities to create GE trees for herbicide tolerance, higher growth rates, improved fiber yield/uniformity, salt tolerance, and much much more! Douglas fir, eucalyptus, banana, papaya, walnut, radiata pine, loblolly pine, Amerikan sweetgum, poplar, European larch, white spruce, orange, kiwifruit, cottonwood, alder and elm are all being genetically mutated and mutilated.

GE trees take a lot more energy, time, tools and research. For nighttime forestry it is important to have the right tools. Saws, hand saws, loppers, pruning tools, and ring-barking/girdling equipment are essential. Sometimes just good old brute force can bring down a small sapling. Or you can just snap it in two with your gloved hands. For small seedlings, cutting and pulling work together to make sure they not only are out of the earth, but cannot be put back in. Apparently, our distant cousins in England used a tool to "ring-bark" trees, which involves cutting a ring into the bark in a complete circle, which will end the tree's life. They also used knives to cut away the bark. The benefits of this silent method hold great potential.

Some GE tree sites are absolutely enormous and you can easily get lost in them. Others are small plots that won't take much time. Research sites generally have various sizes of trees, so come prepared accordingly. Frankentrees will most likely be out in the fields year round and are part of long-term research. Years of research have gone into them, so be meticulous in your work. Nighttime forestry works because the potency of economic sabotage is strongly felt at the frankenforest institution. GE trees are also likely to be in pots in greenhouses at the research sites. Greenhouses can be spray painted, stink-bombed, broken, and have every pot within them emptied.

Appendices

A) Genetically engineered organisms that have been released in the environment in the form of field tests by the USDA/APHIS.

AlfalfaAmelanchier LaevisAnthurium andreanumAppleArab. ThalianaArabidopsisAspergillus flavusBarleyBeetBelledonnaBrassica oleraceaCarrotCephalosporiumgramineumChrysantheumCichorium intybusClavibacterCalvibacter xyliCoffeeCornCottonCranberryCreeping bentgrassCryphonectria parsiticaCucumberCucurbita texanaE.ColiEggplantFetsuca Fusarium graminearumFusarium moniliformeFusarium sporotrichiodes

GladiolusGrapeGrapefruitHeterorhabditisbactriophoraKentucky bluegrassLettuceMelonMetaseilus occidentalisOatOnionPapayaPeaPeanutPearPelargoniumPepperPersimmonPetuniaPinePineapplePink bollwormPlumPoplarPopulus deltoidesPotatoPseudomonasPseudomonas putidaPseudomonas syringaeRapeseedRhizobiumRhizobium etli Rhizobium frediiRhizobiumleguminosarumRhizobium meliotiRiceRubus idaeusSoybeanSpruceSquashStrawberrySugrabeanSunflow erSweet PotatoSweetgumTEVTMVTobaccoTomatoWalnut WatermelonWheatXanthomonasXanthomonas campestris

B) Links/Resources:

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture/Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service (APHIS).
http://gophisb.biochem.vt.edu/cfdocs/fieldtests1.cfm
Database of GE organisms released.

Bioengineering Action Network
http://www.tao.ca/~ban
links to more research, action news, etc.

--Genetix Alert
Receives anonymous communiques from nighttime gardeners and communicates with the press.
GenetX Alert Press Office:genetixalert@tao.ca

Genetic Engineering Network (UK)
http://www.dmac.co.uk/gen.html

--There are so many resources on the internet for locating sites and researchers that space does not allow for further information. But it's all out there for you to learn!

* * *

Squatting as a Protest Tactic

Tips for Squatting as a Political Act

1) BRING CAMCORDERS, TAPE RECORDERS, CAMERAS, NOTEPADS AND PRESS PASSES

This will help deter police harassment and, if it occurs, provide you with a record of it. It will also help you to document and celebrate any victories in gaining your aims.

If you are journalist, bring your press pass. It can help you get access to sites and information that authorities are trying to keep from the public eye. It's amazing how humanely officials can act when they know that others are watching.

2) STAY IN CONSTANT TOUCH WITH SQUATTERS WORLDWIDE

This cross-fertilizes strategies and helps you decide what may work or not locally. It also builds morale,
especially when authorities are trying to discredit you and threatening arrests to scare off supporters.

Nowadays, the Internet is an excellent link to other squatters in a world where over a billion people are
houseless--even in wealthy nations.

Homes Not Jails (Boston chapter) homepage is a good place to start, at: http://www.homesnotjails.org

3) GIVE EVERY PARTICIPANT AN "EVICTION ALERT PHONETREE"

The list should include contact phone numbers for the news desks of alternative and mainstream media — local TV, newspapers and radio, plus wire services such as United Press and Reuters. Don't forget college papers and radio stations.

Also include contact numbers for supporters to mobilize quickly if arrests occur. Perhaps you can find progressive members of City Council, clergy or other "notables" to promise to be arrested if you are "evicted" from the site. But make sure they do not take over and co-opt your aims. (For more on this, see point 5.)

4) CREATE 'LEGAL SUPPORT" ROLES FOR THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO BE ARRESTED

Never "guilt-trip" those who may not want to do civil disobedience. Make sure they are in a spot where they will not be arrested. Help them choose legal support tasks. These include meetings, transport, materials, cash, outreach, publicity and legal help--to name but a few.

5) MAKE YOUR SPOKESPEOPLE THOSE MOST AFFECTED--HOMELESS PEOPLE

I think it's a form of "domestic colonialism" when non-poor people speak for the poor, even when "progressives" do it. When actions show signs of success, politicians and services providers often try to take control, take credit and take any resources you win (such as housing and cash).

Homeless peoples' aims get lost in such shuffles--as well as the materials to survive and thrive that homeless people deserve. Choose your allies carefully, and let homeless people speak for ourselves.

6) MAKE DEMANDS THAT LINK THE KEY ISSUES--CIVIL RIGHTS, HOMES FOR ALL, WAGE-RENT SLAVERY

Be realistic. Demand the impossible. What is "politically feasible" today is far short of what people need and deserve. Accept no substitutes. You may get what you ask for--so ask for everything.

7) WIDELY PUBLICIZE AND ENFORCE A BAN ON ALL ALCOHOL AND DRUGS ON SITE

People who are high or agitated at your actions will undercut your credibility with the public who can help win your demands. If you see someone with drugs or alcohol, ask them to take it off the site--first time, every time. Fighting drunks will discredit your actions quickly.

8) GET ADVICE AND SUPPORT FROM CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS

One group that comes to mind is National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty (which works closely with National Coalition for the Homeless). The Law Center recently published a report on police harassment of homeless people, titled "Mean Sweeps". If you use the Internet, you can link to the Law Center (and other useful information on homelessness) via the National Coalition for the Homeless homepage at:

http://www.nationalhomeless.org/

The National Lawyers Guild and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) are groups worth working with, especially if people are arrested.

9) HAVE SQUATTING SUPPLIES ON SITE AND NEARBY

If you manage to hold a building, authorities may try to starve you out. So have water, blankets, food, soap and buckets for human waste inside--before you publicly announce your site. Also have cell phones inside, so that you can have contact with supporters outside. Don't forget musical instruments to celebrate your struggle -- and to accompany you as you sing "We Shall Not Be Moved".

[From "Squat for Affordable Housing" by Tom Boland]

Rooftop Occupations

by Anonymous
with modifications by the editor

Tree-sitting has been a popular form of protest for some time now, but what is the urban activist to do when all around is nothing but gray, ugly oppressive buildings?

The answer: take one!

Taking over a building roof nonviolently is a simple and effective form of protest. It's safe, fun, and almost always leads to media coverage of the event. This document describes in as much detail as possible how to do this.

Planning What to Do Once you Have the Building

Before you take over a building roof, first decide what you're going to do once you successfully have control of it. Will you hang banners on the sides? Will you have a hunger strike? Will you have a "street party" complete with music and fire-breathing? If you're doing this for the first time, I'd recommend sticking with just banners and expanding from there.

It's also important to keep your "eye on the ball". What is your ultimate goal in taking over the roof? Likely it will be raising awareness of your issue and gaining visibility, but be clear on your goals ahead of time, as with every decision you make you will want to make sure it is compatible with this goal.

Once you have your goal in mind, start working towards it. If you plan on hanging banners from the sides, make those banners now. If you plan on having a rooftop "street party", begin the necessary networking now.

Finding a Building to Take Over

There are different strategies for doing this. You may find the building, or the building may find you.

* Unlocked Doors or Easy Access

First, methodically go into every 8 story or higher building in the downtown area of your city and check for easy roof access. Start with your local city government buildings as they are less likely to press charges against you once the standoff is over, whereas a private owner is more likely to throw the book at you due to capital interests.

Find the elevator, go to the top floor, find the stairwell, then start climbing. If you see signs that say "NO ROOF ACCESS" ignore them -- these are sometimes there only to discourage people and often just mean that the roof is (or is supposed to be) locked.

It's also a good idea to dress appropriately as per that building. A dress shirt and tie for men or a nice business skirt for women works wonders in blending in. You should also have a quick "story" should security catch you checking the door to the roof -- usually just acting dumb and saying "I'm lost" is sufficient.

Finding a building with an unlocked door or easy roof access will make your life 100% easier than otherwise.

It's also a good idea to check newer buildings or buildings still under construction, as the roof doors are more likely to be unlocked because they have so many contractors and workers accessing it that they don't bother locking it.

A final "easy access" route is checking fire escapes on the side, but I don't recommend this because then "authority" has an easy way to get to you as well.

* Padlocks and Locked Doors

Some buildings have just padlocks on the door to the roof, or it may have a "hatch" style door. Malls particularly tend to be locked in this manner. Padlocked roof doors are your friend.

If the door is genuinely locked, there's still some easy ways to get in without needing special skills or equipment.

* Special Targets

You may choose a building for a specific reason, be it a mall to protest anti-consumerism or perhaps city hall to protest a certain policy. If that's the case, then your challenge will be to get roof access no matter how entry is secured.

With all buildings, however, stick to one in a high-trafficked area (i.e. downtown) and one that's at least 8 stories high for maximum visibility.

Gaining Roof Access

Once you've found the building, you'll have to crack it open. If the building has open or easy roof access you can skip this section.

* Padlocks

Make note of the size, type, and brand of the lock and go to your local hardware store and purchase a similar-looking lock (or go to a corporate store and shoplift one). Pick up a pair of bolt cutters as well.

Now enter the building with the cutters hidden under a trench-coat (again dressing as a businessperson so as not to arouse attention) and cut the lock off replacing it with the identical one for later use.

If it's not a "new" or "under construction" building, nobody will notice the change for at least a week, if at all!

* Locked Doors

These present much greater of a challenge, but with some patience and ingenuity can be tackled as well.

One method would be social engineering.

For example, you could bring a camera, tripod, and light meter and say that you are a photographer for the local paper (or a student photographer) and need a picture of the city's skyline from the rooftop for a story you're doing. Once you're up there, you can say that it'll take about an hour or so (this is professional photographic equipment after all) and that there's no need for them to stay up there with you, and that you'll let them know when you're done.

While up there, you could call your co-conspirators on a cell phone (or give them a signal from the roof) and they could tromp up the stairwell and you'd begin the action right then and there.

There are plenty of more ways to manipulate your way to an open roof door or key -- use your imagination.

Securing the Roof Door

This is absolutely the most essential step! The only leverage you have is a secure door -- as long as they can't open the door, they can't do anything about your presence short of sending a police helicopter out or doing major damage to the door in attempting to open it, which are both options they won't pursue as long as they know you are peaceful, nonviolent, and are not committing any crimes such as property destruction while you are up there.

So, how does one secure the door with confidence? Answer: weld the fucker!

* Welding

Anything short of welding the thing shut and you risk having your action be cut short. Now, when I say welding, I do mean welding and not just your standard sold-in-grocery-stores propane torch. You'll need to go to a hardware store to get one. I'm not going to go into detail on how to do the welding as most of you won't go to this extreme and those of you that will can get a book or instruction from the salesperson, but I do want to emphasize safety here. Make sure you're not in a "no smoking -- flammable tanks" area of the roof, and make sure there's no chance of someone opening the door while you're welding it, catching you by surprise and causing injury or death.

Also note that if you weld the door you'll probably be causing damage to the property, so be prepared to deal with that when you come down.

* Wire, Bars, and Duct Tape

Every roof door situation is unique, so again, I recommend tons of planning before execution. Take a picture of the inside and outside views of the roof door so you can examine them at home and plan how to shut it.

If you can somehow bar the door shut, do that. Be sure to use an extremely strong bar, one that if you put over your knee and tried to bend would not give even a bit. Anything weaker than that will surely break.

Wiring the door shut can also be effective, especially if in tandem with a bar. You can put wire around the door handle and secure it to something above and below the handle so that the handle will not turn up or down. If it's a round handle, you can put wire around the handle and wire it to something on the building on the handle side of the door, preventing the door from swinging open. You can also try to wire the hinges shut if the hinges are on your side (the outside). Wiring the door handle to the bar blocking the door from opening can add further reinforcement.

If there's a window on the door, put duct tape over the window so that they cannot see how you are keeping the door shut.

One thing to be aware of if using wire is that if they are able to open the door even slightly, once they see the wire they will freak out and think you might have a bomb. It might not be a bad idea to leave a note on the door (or your cell phone number for them to call) to make sure they understand you are an activist and not a terrorist and that you are committed to nonviolence (don't mention that you don't have a bomb unless they specifically ask you).

* Jamming the Lock

If the door was locked, you can put "crazy glue" style adhesive to jam up the barrels inside the lock, which will keep them from being able to open it (if you can lock it beforehand). However, this has the disadvantage of you not being able to let yourself out at the end of your protest, plus causing definite damage to the property, plus not being able to maintain a stronghold as a locksmith could have it off within a matter of hours.

No matter which method you use to secure the door, remember that as soon as they get the door open, it's game over. Also, be sure to check to see if there's more than one door to the roof -- often there's a second door that's used for entry to a heating/air-conditioning area that they could use to come up.

You'll also have to be clever in how to get these materials (as well as your banners, if you're doing it all in one step) into the building and on the roof without arousing attention. Plain boxes work good, but "business-related" boxes work best. For example, a box from a computer monitor would receive no attention at all as it looks like you're moving things or perhaps making a delivery.

Execution of Protest

Once you're up there and the door is secure, your work has only begun. Familiarize yourself with the roof and decide where to set up. Hang your banners using generous amounts of duct tape and/or rope and wire. Be certain your banners won't fall -- if they are lost, so is your action!

Roofs are usually filthy, and as tape does not adhere to dirty surfaces as well as clean surfaces, keep this in mind as a factor.

If you brought a sleeping bag or blanket, break down the box you used to carry the materials onto the roof and use it as a "floor" to put your stuff on -- you can always re-tape it into a box later.

Timing is important as well. Find out ahead of time if security is there 24/7 or if they leave at a certain time. If they're 24/7, then any weekday around noon or so is good as you'll have lots of pedestrians and traffic below. If they leave at a certain time or are gone for the weekend, use that to your advantage to delay their response.

If you live in a city with "rush hour" news helicopters, use that to your advantage as well. Hang all but one of the signs up, put the last sign on the ground of the roof, and call up all the news stations from your cell phone (or have a friend do it from the ground at a predetermined time) so that the media will be all the more likely to cover your action since they're up there and in the air anyway, and it's no extra effort to come out there on their part.

Speaking of the media, if you do contact them be sure to use terms like "holding the building hostage", "giant 100 square foot banners with red letters", "bolted the door completely shut" etc. You want to exaggerate slightly (i.e. truthfully) and play up the "excitement" aspect of it as much as possible. The media loves blood, not nice and quiet peaceful protests.

Dealing with the Police

The police will come. If you have a cell phone, I recommend giving them your number, or even calling them yourself. If you can absolutely assure them that you are committed to nonviolence, that you have nothing up there but a sleeping bag, a book, and the signs, that you are not a danger to yourself or anyone else, and that you will peacefully come down after x number of days, they'll likely let you be. If you plan on being up there indefinitely, at least tell them you'll only be up there for three days or so as they'll be less likely to act (as 3 days is less of a threat than 30 or indefinitely). On that token, Friday night is a good time to go up (with claiming Sunday night as your "coming down" day) because the weekend is less likely to interfere with any legitimate need for the building owner to access the roof, as any contractors will typically be there only on weekdays.

I also recommend giving the police your real name, address, and date of birth. This further communicates to them that you're willing to cooperate and are peaceful, and lets them know that you have nothing to hide and are doing nothing really wrong (outside of trespassing).

If you need to remain anonymous, have a friend on the ground to talk to them to try to affirm the same sentiments. Even here, I do not recommend even wearing a face mask, as that is just one more reason to place doubt in the police's minds that you have something to hide and are therefore doing something illegal (outside of trespassing).

Again, do not mention the fact that you do not have weapons or a bomb up there! If you initiate the subject they will think you are being defensive and are therefore lying -- keep the conversation on the fact that you only want to hang some banners and spend x number of nights there and answer the weapon/bomb question if they bring it up. They'll also ask you if there's anyone up there with you -- if there is, be upfront about it, because if a helicopter discovers evidence to the contrary, again they'll become immediately distrustful and intent on getting you down from there ("If they're lying about that, they're probably lying about other things").

If things go well the police will likely just leave you alone. Don't be surprised if this happens! Also, don't be cocky if this happens. If you make the police (or the city's) response look weak in the eyes of the media, they'll most certainly respond by "throwing the book" at the next person that does this.

Dealing with the Building Owner

Once the police are gone it's not clear sailing from there. The police's interest is in the public safety, but the owner's interest is purely in money.

As long as you're up there, you're a liability to the owner, and you therefore need to be removed.

They might insist that the police break open the door, or they might have their own security staff do it. Whatever happens, you need to make sure the building owner knows what the police do: that you're not doing anything bad up there, etc.

They might not rest as easily with this knowledge as the police; again, if you fell, or injured yourself while up there, since it's on their property (even if it's city property!) you pose a financial liability to them (especially if they left the door open or were easily tricked into opening it for you).

Ultimately, the solution to this problem is what was stated earlier: make sure that door is fucking absolutely shut! As long as it's shut -- and if you state that if they try to open it it'll be costing them money, whereas if they let you be you'll come down peacefully and having caused no damage -- you're safe to stay.

Staying Up

Often there's running water (though brown and dirty) and electrical outlets (plug in a TV and watch yourself on the news!) as well as some form of shelter from the elements. But be prepared.

Bring: clean drinking water (and plenty of it), a container to piss in (you don't want your privates on the news), something to do while you're up there (books, radio, video games), plenty of warm clothing and blankets/sleeping bag (you'd be surprised how cold it is at night on a roof, especially with the wind that's up there), an umbrella if there's no place for shelter, hat/sun screen for the daytime if sunny, a hand-towel (again, it's very filthy on roof tops), nonperishable food (granola bars), plenty of extra wire/weld/duct tape/rope for adapting to unexpected door or banner conditions, and a cell phone (borrow one if you don't have one).

Don't bring: anything not essential, alcohol, weapons or anything that could be construed as a weapon in the event of a bust, or pot. Remember you're on the top of a building with no railing, and you don't want to get drunk or high and end up falling over the edge. Save it to celebrate at home when you get down.

Coming Down

When you're ready to come down, gather up your things, take down the banners (which can be reused), call the media again if they came the first time, remove all traces that you were there (so they can't claim property damage), and come down.

If you're trying to remain anonymous, then come down on a different day than you said you would so it'll catch them by surprise and you can escape.

If you're taking responsibility for your actions (again, which I recommend if you did this peacefully and without damage), give interviews to the media, pose for pictures, then go home, take a shower, and get some sleep!

Finally, even after all this work, don't be surprised if the media ignores your protest completely -- even if they came out to cover it, it doesn't mean they're going to air it, especially if you live in a mid-sized city of 500,000+.

Whether it gets mainstream coverage or not, be sure to have someone take pictures (and/or take pictures yourself) and write up a story or start a website and post the URL on sites that are protesting the same issue. Check http://www.indymedia.org to see if you have a local IMC, go to the local IMC site, and post your article there (being sure to email the editors for possible inclusion as a "front page" story).

Well, that's it. The worst you'll get will be a trespassing charge and/or minor property damage. The best you'll get is widespread coverage on the evening news and newspaper and local notoriety. What you'll get no matter what is an evening of fun and excitement.

Hunger Strikes

What is a Hunger Strike?

A hunger strike is a very serious and highly dangerous protest tactic in which a person simply refuses to eat in an effort to gain attention for their cause or issue. HUNGER STRIKES CAN RESULT IN DEATH, therefore, hunger strikes should only be resorted to as a last resort or in very dire emergency situations.

Some Guidelines for Hunger Strikes

Drink lots of water -- a healthy adult can survive without food for nearly two months, but humans can DIE IN A MATTER OF DAYS without water.
Consume fruit juices and soup broths -- depending on how extreme you want to take your hunger strike you may want to consider drinking fruit juices and soup broth to provide your body with with a modicum of sugars, fats, and basic nutrients.
Consume dietary supplements -- again, depending on how extreme you want to take your hunger strike, you may want to consider taking vitamin and mineral supplements daily to provide your body with basic nutrients.
Find or make a comfortable spot to conduct your hunger strike and remain there -- it is crucial that you conserve as much energy as you can during a hunger strike. Therefore, you should make a conformable spot to rest and avoid any physical activity beyond standing temporarily and walking short distances.
Keep warm in the cold and keep cool in the heat -- by engaging in a hunger strike you will be subjecting your body to incredible abuse and severely weakening your body's natural ability to protect itself against the elements. Because of this it is extremely important that you have the proper clothing and protection appropriate to the weather situation in your area. You will be much more susceptible to hypothermia or heat stroke, take care.

Health Effects of Hunger Strikes

Depending on the length of a hunger strike a person can do severe, in some cases irreparable, damage to their body. The following is a short list of the serious health risks involved in carrying a hunger strike beyond 2-3 weeks --

this info assumes that you are engaging in a water-only hunger strike and you are basically healthy when you begin your hunger strike, also some of these effects are not permanent:

Damage to muscle tissue (after approximately 4 weeks)
Weakening of bones (after approximately 4 weeks)
Hallucinations / Dementia (after approximately 3 weeks)
Potentially permanent brain damage (after approximately 4 to 5 weeks)
Potentially permanent damage to internal organs (after approximately 4 to 5 weeks)
Failure of internal organs (after approximately 4 to 5 weeks)
Death (could happen at any time depending on the state of your health)

Street Parties and Street Theater

How to start a street party

1 Get together with some like-minded people. Possibly your friends. Work on a plan of action. Sort out different roles, jobs and time scales. Imagine. What's possible?

2 Decide on a date. Give yourselves enough time. Not too much - a "deadline" is a great motivator - but enough to sort the practicals: materials, construction etc. You may need money.

3 Choose the location. Your street, the town center, a busy road or roundabout, a motorway! A separate meeting place is good: people like a mystery, bureaucrats don't.

4 Publicize! Word of mouth, leaflets, posters, e-mail, carrier pigeon. Make sure everyone knows where and when to meet. Posters and paste go well on walls, billboards and phone boxes. Leaflet shops, clubs, pubs - everyone, and your mum.

5 Sort out your sound system. A party needs music - rave, plugged-in, acoustic, yodelling - go for diversity. Invite jugglers and clowns, poets, prophets and performers of all kinds. Ask campaign groups to come along and set up a stall in the middle of the road.

6 How will you transform the space? Huge banners with a message of your choice, colorful murals, bouncy castle, a ton of sand and a paddling pool for the kids, carpets, armchairs. The materials and money from earlier may come in useful here. Print up an explanation for this "collective daydream" to give to participants and passersby on the day.

7 For opening the street - or rather stopping it being re-closed by the traffic – ribbons and scissors are not enough. A large scaffold tripod structure with a person suspended from the top has been found useful. Practice in your local park. Blocking the road with a car that can then be dismantled is nice. Even the traditional "barricade" will do.

8 Rescue some young trees from the road of your local "development" and have them ready for planting. You may need a pneumatic drill and safety goggles for the last bit.

9 Have a street party! Enjoy the clean air and colorful surroundings, the conversation and the community Bring out the free food, dance, laugh and set off the fire hydrants. Some boys in blue may get irate. Calm them down with clear instructions.

10 At least a couple of the boys in blue will fail to get the point and nick people - six is generally the minimum to convince their paymasters it was worth all that overtime. Of course you found a lawyer who understands about street protests and distributed a bust card with their number, a phone number to collect details of arrestees, and basic advice - the Release bust card is a good basis in the UK. Make sure someone stays awake, alert and near that phone to take messages, gather names, and organize a defendants' meeting a week or two later. Get together with even more like-minded friends and plan the next one. Organize in your community, workplace, school & street.

[From "Reclaim the Streets: How to sort a street party" http://www.gn.apc.org/rts/sortit.htm]

* * *

Street Theater

Organizing Pageants and Parades

Pageants, parades, and processions are important because they take over public space and transform it into a place in which anything can happen - dragons, giant goldfishes, purple people. A Puppet Procession does that - and not just that. A space people walk through everyday in their daily lives suddenly becomes completely other, and people can see that they can make anything they want of their own home. Puppets can make thoughts real. It's not only imaginary animals which can materialize – Faith, Hope, Charity, the redwoods, capitalism, summer, exasperation, the multiplication tables, and the desire for world peace or to dance the Hokie-Pokie can all take form and walk down the street greeting their devoted fans.

Outdoor performances like puppet processions are responsive to the community in a very particular way which has to do with the experience of performing out of doors. Street performance is amazingly intense, not so much for the audience as for the performer. It can be very difficult. In a theater, everything - the seats, the stage, the lights – all say ‘sit still and listen' in the street, everything says ‘hey, look around, there might be something more interesting over there'. People find it easy to walk away, and being walked away from on the street is incredibly painful. There is no distance, no stage, no lights, to protect the person who finds themselves giving their all to turned backs. It's rejection in its purest form. On the other hand, when the audience approves, there is also no distance to take the edge off the applause of what appears to be the entire immediate world. To walk down the street as thousands cheer. Everyone deserves to do it once in a while!

The audience learns very quickly how much power it has to direct these events. When we first started
videotaping the First Night parades here in Boston, one of the things I noticed was that, for instance, when the dragons (we always have a dragon section) paraded by, the audience waved rolled up magazines in the plain expectation of defending themselves in case of attack - they challenged the dragons with these dragon-wackers and quickly taught even dragons who had never paraded before to fight. When the giant human puppets went by, you could hear the crowd yelling "shake my hand!" all up and down the street. In other words, by organizing your puppet parade, you are training a generation of artists of your city to pay attention to, and to make art for, the people of your city rather than

some general theoretical audience, and you are teaching their audience that they can have an immediate effect on at least this kind of art.

But for both groups to learn from the procession takes time. You will need a group of puppeteers and puppet builders, and you will need to establish a good relationship with them, one which has a chance of continuing. You are working with your community, whether with artists or community groups or with a group which you yourself are organizing, creating that group of puppeteers. So the question is, how do you persuade all those other people to want to turn puppeteer and make your parade for you? They have to want to! Making a parade is a lot of work!

Local themes work - natural features of the landscape, the buildings of the city, local legends and local heroes. Large general concepts work well too: the four elements, the five senses, the Marriage of sea and sky, the Triumph of the Arts, or the night, or organic farming. The advantage of large general concepts is that they have enough give in them to include most things that people want to make for their own reasons.

One way to express a theme and to unify a parade is by color. If you have a blue and green section and a yellow and red section, for instance, the majority of puppets and puppet sections will naturally fit into one or the other. Another is by shape or group. A school of fish or jam of traffic will look unified even with great individual variations in the fish or cars. The most important way to unify a parade is by music. A lot of the meaning of an event is carried by the music; think of the end of a movie, one of those meaningful movie sunsets, how a movie-ending sunset can be a sad ending or a happy ending depending on the music played over it. Music is also very important in helping the puppets to move - because their movements are larger than human, they are also slower, and people have trouble finding the right rhythm without music. They need a beat!

So you've gathered your artists, bands, and/or community groups and figured out a theme, and you start to think about the technical aspects of the event - what sort of puppets to make, (a few big ones, many little ones, an army of rowdy tree stump people ? One gorgeous sky goddess?).

There are various types of giant puppet events, and they correspond to various kinds and combinations of artistic and community groups.

The artists' parade: A procession of large multi-person singular personages; the pageant associated with this procession is a modern version of the mediaeval masque, with well-choreographed dances of one giant puppet or a tight group of puppets, with the plot carried by speeches in between the dances. These events are complicated to build, but easy to run in the sense that you are dealing with people who are capable of building big complicated puppets. The advantage of this sort of event is that it has fewer people to deal with. The disadvantage is the same - you are involving less of the community. The advantage of this event visually is that it has large impressive puppets. The disadvantage is that because they are large they are necessarily isolated from each other. This leads to the Parade of Roses sort of situation where you see one large object, then another large object, either interspersed with speeches or not. This can become boring. It also means that there is less possibility of interaction with the audience.

Massed groups of smaller puppets: I think of this as the schools pageant and procession. This type of event corresponds to work with already formed groups - bands, schools, and so on. These events do tend to be groups of children, because children are already herded into convenient groups. This is advantageous in that they are already there. The disadvantage is that they do have so many children - their artistic skills may not be high, and they can't carry the larger puppets, so that your event may be less impressive than it would otherwise be. The fact that all the puppets are small may also give them a certain visual sameness, although the parades I've seen made this way can be very interesting.

The Samba or Carnival procession: sections consisting of large puppets supporting and supported by
entourages of smaller puppets. A sort of combination of the other two, it can make an impression with less, because the fact that it's a coherent whole means that none of it is wasted effort. Its advantage and
disadvantage both is the mixture of types of groups necessary for this effect. For a performance like this, the most important thing is to have a narrator and musicians who can improvise to cover any gaps or unexpected events.

So now you're finally about to start building your procession. Remember: puppets are physical objects.
Whatever you make your procession out of, you'll need a lot of it. Physical materials don't respond to rational argument as well as people. If you have a chance to pick up a lot of ugly cloth cheap, remember that it won't become more attractive no matter how often you point out that it was cheap. If you can't find wire strong enough to support a bird's wing, the bird's wing won't stand up no matter how many times you explain to it that nothing else was

available. If you pick up a lot of pastel paint, it won't mix up into primary colors no matter how often you say that ‘paint is paint'. People respond to argument, pressure, and guilt trips. Materials are unreasonable. You, or whoever is doing the buying, should take the time to get to know your local materials. Wander the hardware stores. Look at the cloth stores. Think about what you see a little. This cloth is pretty, but how heavy would 12 yards of it be? In the wind? How much weight would this wire bear? Check out local resources. Are there bamboo groves in the area? Plastic factories or paper mills? Because you or the people making your puppets probably haven't made them before, they are going to come up with unexpected needs - shopping is a constant in puppet building workshops. It will be a lot easier if you know what is available and where to find it.

[Excerpted from "About Organizing Pageants and Parades" by the Puppeteers' Cooperative]

Design Ideas for Puppets

Fathead

Purely Cardboard

Fathead Fish

Car

Note: These are good puppets to make with even very small children. They can draw the original shape, and after an adult has cut out the two sides and put them together, they can do low relief on them with papier mache, or just paint them. The shape can be made less boxy by making the connecting strips wider or narrower.

Pole Dragon

Note: This is a good puppet for young children to make.

Face Banner

Note: This needs several layers of very light cloth, preferably cheesecloth.

Shimmy Dancer

Note: Shimmy Dancer takes about six yards of cloth for costume and hair. The hoops are in seams in the cloth.

Hattifatner

Note: Hattifatner takes about six yards of cloth.

The Examples of Pageants and Processions

The Street is a Shining Sea

Urbanity

Improvement

1) Selecting a Billboard

In choosing a sign, keep in mind that the most effective alterations are often the simplest. If you can totally change the meaning of an advertisement by changing one or two letters, you'll save a lot of time and trouble. Some ads lend themselves to parody by the inclusion of a small image or symbol in the appropriate place (a skull, radiation symbol, happy face, swastika, vibrator, etc.). On other boards, the addition of a cartoon "thought bubble" or "speech balloon" for one of the characters might be all that is needed.

Once you have identified a billboard message you wish to improve, you may want to see if there are multiple locations displaying the same advertisement. You should determine which ones give your message optimum visibility. A board on a central freeway will obviously give you more exposure than one on an obscure side street. You must then weigh the location/visibility factor with other crucial variables such as physical accessibility, potential escape routes, volume of foot and vehicular traffic during optimum alteration hours, etc. Of course, if you can improve more than one board in the same campaign, so much the better.

There are several standard sign types in the outdoor advertising industry. Knowing which type of sign you are about to alter may prove useful in planning the operation:

Bulletins are large outdoor sign structures, typically situated alongside federal highways and major urban freeways. They measure 14 x 48 feet and are usually leased in multi-month contracts, meaning that an advertisement will stay in place for at least 60 days.

30-Sheet Poster Panels measure 12 x 25 feet, are situated along primary and secondary roadways, and are usually updated every 30 days.

8-Sheet Poster Panels measure 6 x 12 feet and are usually found in high-density urban neighborhoods and suburban shopping areas. They are designed to reach both pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and are leased in 30-day increments.

Out-of-Home Media is the industry term for advertising targeted at people on the go, including bus shelters, bus exterior s, taxis, subway stations, street furniture (newsstands, benches, kiosks), painted walls, and "indoor out of home" locations like airports and malls.

There are of course many non-standard formats as well, and these frequently make the most intriguing targets. Oversized bulletins, animated signs, painted buildings, and boards with neon all offer unique challenges for advanced operations. Signs featuring large, illuminated text can often be improved simply by turning off a few letters, converting 'HILLSDALE" to "LSD," for instance, or "HOTEL ESSEX" to "HOT SEX." The possibilities are limited only by your imagination.

2) Planning the Improvement Action

Though the sudden urge to just climb right up a sign and start hacking can occasionally be overwhelming, in our experience this type of "impulse improvement" tends to deliver unsatisfactory results, at unnecessary personal risk. The guidelines that follow draw on the BLF's proud 20-year history of planning and executing such actions without injury or arrest.

A) Accessibility. How do you get up on the board? Will you need your own ladder to reach the bottom of the board's ladder? Can you climb the support structure? Is the board on a building rooftop, and if so, can it be reached from within the building, from a fire escape, or perhaps from an adjoining building? If you need ladders to work the board, they may occasionally be found on platforms on or behind the board, or on adjacent boards or rooftops.

B) Practicality. How big are the letters and/or images you would like to change? How close to the platform at the bottom of the board is your work area? On larger boards you can rig from above and hang over the face to reach points that are too high to reach from below. We don't recommend this method unless you have some climbing and rigging experience. When hanging in one position your work area is very limited laterally. Your ability to leave the scene quickly diminishes proportionately to how convoluted your position has become. Placing huge words or images is much more difficult.

C) Security. After choosing your board, be sure to inspect it, both during the day and at night. Take note of all activities in the area. Who is about at 2:00 a.m.? How visible will you be while scaling the support structure?

Keep in mind you will make noise; are there any apartment or office windows nearby? Is anyone home? Walk lightly if you're on a rooftop-who knows who you're walking over.

What is the visibility to passing cars on surface streets and freeways? What can you see from your work position on the board? Even though it is very difficult to see a figure on a dark board at night, it is not impossible. Any point you have line-of-sight vision to is a point from which you can be observed. How close is your board to the nearest police station or Highway Patrol headquarters? What is their patrol pattern in the area? Average response time to Joe Citizen's call? You can get an idea by staking out the area and observing. Is it quiet at night or is there a lot of foot traffic? When the bars let out, will this provide cover-i.e., drunks keeping the cops busy-or will it increase the likelihood of detection by passersby? Do they care? If you are definitely spotted, it may pay to have your ground crew approach them rather than just hoping they don't call the cops. Do not let them connect you with a vehicle. Have your ground crew pretend to be chance passersby and find out what the observer thinks. We've been spotted at work a number of times and most people were amused. You'll find that most people, including officials, don't look up unless given a reason to do so.

Go up on the board prior to your hit. Get a feeling for being there and moving around on the structure at night. Bring a camera-it's a good cover for doing anything you're not supposed to: "Gee, officer, I'm a night photographer, and there's a great shot of the bridge from up here . . . " Check your escape routes. Can you cross over rooftops and leave by a fire escape across the block? etc., etc.

D) Illumination. Most boards are brightly lit by floodlights of some type. Most large boards are shut off some time between 11:00 p.m. and 2:00 am by a time clock control somewhere on or near the board. Smaller boards frequently are controlled by photo-electric cells or conventional time clocks, also somewhere on the board. If you find the photo-electric cell, you can turn the lights on the board off by taping a small flashlight directly into the cell's "eye." This fools the unit into thinking it's daytime and shutting the lights off.

As noted, most larger boards are controlled by time clocks. These can be found in the control panels at the base of the support structure and/or behind the board itself. These panels are often locked (particularly those at the structure's base). Unless you are familiar with energized electrical circuitry and devices of this type we caution you to wait until the clock shuts itself off at midnight or so. Many of these boards run 220 volts and could fry you to a crisp.

E) Daytime Hits. We don't recommend this method for most high boards on or near freeways and major roads. It works well for doing smaller boards lower to the ground where the alteration is relatively quick and simple. If you do choose to work in the light, wear coveralls (company name on the back?) and painters' hats, and work quickly. Keep an eye out for parked or passing vehicles bearing the billboard company's or advertiser's name. Each board has the company emblem at its bottom center. If you're on a Sleaze Co. board and a Sleaze Co. truck pulls up, you're probably in trouble. It is unlikely that the workers will try to physically detain you (try bribery if necessary), but they will probably call the cops.

3) Producing Graphical Overlays

Though powerful improvements are occasionally executed with nothing more than a spray can and a sharp wit, most actions require the production of some type of graphical overlay to alter the board's message. The more professional-looking these overlays, the greater impact your modified ad is likely to have on the public. This is not to say that every hit needs to look exactly like an original - this would be prohibitively expensive for most groups, and in these days of computer-assisted photo enhancement, could arguably lead to the accusation that your hit was a binary illusion, crafted on a Macintosh rather than on the urban landscape. While technical competence is a worthy goal to pursue (and a major motivator for the BLF), the success or failure of your alteration will ultimately depend more on the quality of your thinking and the power of your altered message than on how well you can match a font.

A) Choosing a Production Method. Before you get too deep into the design process, you need to decide how the overlays will be produced. If you're lucky enough to have access to commercial sign-printing equipment, you can go the professional route and opt for industry-standard vinyl. Vinyl overlays are strong, light, easy to transport, and easy to apply, but unless you have an industry insider on your team, they will probably be too expensive to produce. If you or a collaborator have late-night access to the facilities of a commercial printer, neighborhood copy shop, or advertising bureau, you may be able to output your overlays on a large-format color printer or plotter. The venerable LaserMaster, with its sturdy coated paper and 36-inch track, is a BLF favorite, but there are many other models in the field.

Printing on paper nearly always requires a process known as "tiling" - cutting the image up into smaller pieces that are then reassembled into a whole. Popular computer programs like Quark Xpress and Adobe PageMaker can perform this function automatically, by selecting the "Tiling" option from the Print menu. If you don't have access to a wide-track printer, try to locate a machine that can handle 11x17 tabloid-sized paper - the bigger your printer's output, the fewer pieces you'll have to tile back together to create a finished overlay. Most neighborhood copy shops and many corporate offices now have color printers/copiers with 11x17 output.

For low cost and maximum durability, consider canvas. When impregnated with oil-based lacquer paint, a canvas overlay has the potential to last longer than the sign surface it's affixed to. It's heavier to carrier and more difficult to secure to the sign, but it's a reliable, low-tech alternative that can be implemented inexpensively.

We don't recommend using overlays much larger than 4'x3'. If your message is larger, you should section it and butt the sections together for the finished image. It gets very windy on boards, and large paste-overs are difficult to apply.

B) Scale. If you are changing only a small area (one letter, a small symbol, etc.) you probably do not need to go to any elaborate lengths to match or design your "overlay" (we'll use this term to describe the finished image/lettering you'll be applying to the board). Just take actual measurements or tracings directly off the board. If, however, you intend to create overlays of great size and/or number of letters and you want the finished image to look as much as possible like the advertisers themselves had made it, you should plan on more elaborate preparation. Find a position roughly level with the board and looking at it square on (200 to 1000 or so feet away). Photograph the board from this position and make a tracing from a large print of the photo. Using measurements you have taken on the board (height, width, letter height, etc.), you can create a scale drawing of your intended alteration. From this, it is possible to determine how large your overlays will need to be and what spacing will be required between letters.

C) Color Matching. There are two basic ways to match the background and/or colors of the lettering or image area:

1. On painted or paper boards you can usually carve a small (1"x1") sample directly off the board. This does not always work on older painted boards which have many thick layers of paint.

2. Most large paint stores carry small paint sampler books. It is possible to get a pretty close match from these samplers. We suggest sticking to solid colors and relatively simple designs for maximum visual impact.

D) Letter Style. If you wish to match a letter style exactly, pick up a book of fonts from a graphic arts store or borrow one from a self-serve print shop. Use this in conjunction with tracings of existing letters to create the complete range of lettering needed for your alteration. You can convincingly fake letters that aren't on the board by finding a closely matching letter style in the book and using tracings of letters from your photo of the board as a guide for drawing the new letters.

E) Producing Overlays From Computer Output. Computers with desktop publishing software offer many advantages to the modern billboard liberator. Fonts and colors can be matched precisely, professional-looking graphical elements can be added to your text message, and scale and spacing become much easier to calculate. There are many software packages suitable for producing overlays, including PageMaker, Quark Xpress, Illustrator, Freehand, CorelDraw, and various CAD programs. Adobe Photoshop gives you the additional flexibility of being able to preview your hit - just scan in a photograph of the original board and apply your modification over it as an independent layer.

After you have designed the overlay and printed out your tiles, you'll need to assemble the individual printouts jigsaw-style and glue them onto some sort of backing material. Heavy pattern paper works best for this, but you can also use 1/8-inch foamcore for smaller overlays, i.e. those less than 30 inches on a side. Start in one corner, adhering the first tile with spray adhesive to the backing material. Carefully assemble the rest of the tiles, trimming off unprinted margin space as required and laying them down one at a time, making sure all the edges are well-secured. If you get a little off-kilter at some point in the process and the pieces don't line up with absolute precision, don't worry - large-scale work is more forgiving since people will be viewing it at a distance. When all the tiles are secured, reinforce the edges with clear packing tape. If it's going to be a wet night, or if there's a chance your work may stay up for a few days or more, consider weather-proofing your overlay with a coat of clear lacquer.

F) Tiling With a Photocopier. If you don't have access to a computer with desktop publishing software, but do have access to a good copy machine, you can duplicate the procedure described above using the copier's "enlarge" function. First, create a scale original of your overlay on a single sheet of paper, using stencils or rub-off lettering. Next, pencil a grid over your drawing, with each square being equivalent to the largest size of paper the copier can accommodate (letter, legal, tabloid, etc.). Cut the original into pieces along the penciled lines, then enlarge each piece on the copier, going through as many generations as necessary until each piece fills its own sheet of paper. Assemble the pieces as described above, adding color with lacquer paints or permanent markers. Weatherproof if desired.

G) Producing Overlays by Hand. We recommend using heavy pattern paper and high-gloss, oil-based lacquer paints. The lacquer paint suffuses the paper, making it super-tough, water resistant, and difficult to tear. For making overlays, roller coat the background and spray paint the lettering through cardboard cut-out templates of the letters. For extremely large images or panels, use large pieces of painted canvas. The canvas should be fairly heavy to avoid being ripped to shreds by the winds that buffet most billboards. Glue and staple 1"x4" pine boards the entire horizontal lengths of the top and bottom of the canvas. The canvas will then roll up like a carpet for transportation and can be unrolled over the top of the board and lowered into place by ropes.

H) Methods of Application. Although there are many types of adhesive that can be used, we recommend rubber cement. Rubber cement is easily removable (but if properly applied will stay up indefinitely) and does not damage or permanently mark the board's surface. This may become important if you're apprehended and the authorities and owners attempt to assess property damage. Application of rubber cement on large overlays is tricky. You need to evenly coat both the back-side of the overlay and the surface of the board that is to be covered. Allow one to two minutes drying time before applying the paper to the board. To apply the cement, use full sized (10") house paint rollers and a five-gallon plastic bucket. Have one person coat the back of the overlays while another coats the board's surface. Both people will be needed to affix the coated overlay to the finished board surface. On cool nights there may be condensation on the board, in which case the area to be covered needs to be wiped down first - use shop towels or a chamois for this.

To level overlay panels on the board, measure up from the bottom (or down from the top) of the board to the bottom line of where it needs to be in order to cover the existing copy. Make small marks at the outermost left and right-hand points. Using a chalk snap line with two people, snap a horizontal line between these two points. This line is your marker for placing your overlay(s).

If you have a canvas or paper overlay as described in (F) above, you can either tie the four corners and middle (top and bottom) very securely, or, if you can reach the face of the board by ladder or rope, attach the panel by screwing the 1"x4" boards to the billboard. A good battery powered drill is needed for this. We recommend hex-head "Tek" sheet metal screws, #8 or #10 size. Use a hex head driver bit for your drill. These screws work well on either wood backboards or sheet metal.

4) Executing the Hit

Once you've completed your preparations and are ready for the actual hit, there are many things which can be done to minimize the risk of apprehension and/or injury:

A) Personnel. Have the smallest number of people possible on the board. Three is about optimum-two for the actual work and one lookout/communications person. Depending on your location, you may require additional spotting personnel on the ground (see below).

B) Communications. For work on larger boards where you're exposed for longer periods of time, we recommend compact CB units or FM-band walkie-talkies. Low cost CB walkie-talkies are available from Radio Shack and elsewhere, and can can fitted with headsets and microphones for ease of use.

Have one or two cars positioned at crucial intersections within sight of the board. The ground crew should monitor oncoming traffic and maintain radio contact with the lookout on the board. (Note: Do not use the popular CB or FM channels; there are many other frequencies to choose from. A verbal code is a good idea since the channels you will be using will not be secure.)

It's crucial that the ground crew don't lounge around their vehicle(s) or in any other way make it obvious that they're hanging around in a (likely) desolate area late at night for no apparent reason. A passing patrol car will notice them much sooner than they will notice operatives on the board. Keep a low profile. We've found that lookouts dressed as winos, or as homeless couples, are virtually invisible additions to the urban landscape. Park all vehicles out of sight of the operation.

C) Safety. The risk of apprehension on a board pales in comparison to the risk of falling, and safety concerns should always prevail over security. If you're not an experienced climber, you're better off helping out on the ground: as a security lookout, graphic designer or publicist. Even if you are an experienced climber, we don't recommend solo actions on any board larger than 8 panels (6x12 feet). Ideally, all field actions should incorporate the buddy system, but particularly those that require any sort of rigging. If you're going to lean over the top of the board to affix any overlays, you should have a secured partner belaying you. It's a long way down, so be careful up there.

D) Clean-up. Billboard structures are notorious trash magnets as it is; don't make matters worse by leaving your empty glue tubes, discarded vinyl backing, cigarette butts and empties on the property. The responsible billboard liberator leaves nothing of his own behind (not even fingerprints), though he may on occasion leave a cold six-pack for the benefit of those hard-working signmen assigned to the unglamorous task of un-altering his alteration.

E) Escape. If you've done your homework, you'll know the terrain surrounding the board quite well. In the event of detection, prepare a number of alternate routes out of the area, and a rendezvous point with the ground support crew. If a patrol is approaching and you are in a difficult spot for quickly ditching and hiding (hanging on a rope in the middle of the board, for instance), it may be better simply to stay still until they pass. Movement is more likely to catch the eye.

Once on the ground, if pursuit is imminent, hiding may be your safest bet. If you've covered the terrain carefully, you'll be aware of any good hiding spots. Keep in mind that if the police do a thorough search (doubtful, but not impossible), they will use high-powered spotlights from cars and flashlights if on foot.

Stashed clothing in your hiding spot may prove useful. A business suit, perhaps, or rumpled and vomit-encrusted leisure wear. Be creative.

5) Publicizing Your Action

Like the advertisements they improve, your actions should aim for the greatest possible reach. Try to time your improvement so it stays up for as long as possible, and generates the greatest possible number of "impressions." Actions executed at the beginning of a holiday weekend tend to stay up longest, since repair crews are less readily available. Yet even if your improvement survives for two or three days on a major urban thoroughfare, it won't attain the kind of reach you can get with media attention.

A) Photographs. Color slides are best for magazine and newspaper submissions, but online publishers prefer high-resolution JPEG files. Be sure to get a good "before" picture of the board to be altered, ideally taken from the same camera position and at the same time of day (or night) as the "after" photograph. An "after" picture should be taken as soon as possible after the action is completed; if you want a daytime shot as well, come back for it later.

B) Press Releases. May be serious or surreal, according to your motives and whim. Basically a cover letter for your photographs, which comprise the essence of the story. Most libraries carry one of the major PR reference guides, which list contacts for every printed publication and broadcast company in the country (while you're there, research standard AP style for press releases). Better yet, record your manifesto on an audio cassette or CD, then tape it to the bottom of a payphone outside a reporter's office and call in your "anonymous tip." The more creative you are, the more likely you are to get the desired response.

Postscript

If anyone reading this primer finds it of any use in their own advertising endeavors, we at the BLF will consider it successful. We believe roadside advertising enhancement is a pastime more individuals should engage in. It's not that difficult to do smaller, low-to-the-ground boards. A quick hit-and-run on such a board will not require all of the elaborate preparations and precautions we have detailed. The more "real" messages we have on the freeways and streets, the better.

[From "The Art & Science of Billboard Improvement" by the Billboard Liberation Front http://www.billboardliberation.com/resources/manual.html]

Jail Solidarity

How solidarity works

We have more power when we act together than when we act alone. Solidarity is the way we protect each other in our struggles, share the consequences and mitigate the suffering we encounter when confronting oppressive power. The purpose of solidarity is to build our movement, and to embody our mutual care and concern for justice.

Solidarity works best when we respect each other's differing needs and life circumstances, understand that there are many ways of being in solidarity, and coordinate our responses. It does not work when we attempt to coerce, shame or inflict guilt upon each other, even subtly.

Through solidarity, we can pressure the system to treat us fairly and justly, to protect the physical safety and health of jailed protesters, to treat arrested protesters equally, to prevent individuals from being singled out, to improve jail conditions, to resist harsh or unequal punishment or sentences that would constrict our future freedom. Solidarity puts pressure on the system by raising the social and political costs of its oppressive acts, raising the economic costs of holding us in jail or bringing us to trial, and by interfering with the smooth running of the system. Solidarity can be extremely effective, but it is always exercised at a cost. Before deciding on a solidarity strategy, we need to know what our intentions and goals are for any given action.

Outside support

For any form of solidarity to work, supporters are vital. Their job is to bring to bear political pressure on the authorities: calling, writing letters, sending emails, holding vigils at the jail, contacting the media, and organizing others to do all of the same. Released prisoners can be in solidarity with those still in jail by participating in outside support. Support should be organized ahead of time for all actions.

Legal support

Solidarity negotiations are most often carried out by the legal team, who need to understand the protesters strategy, be willing to furnish information and help with communications, and to understand that a solidarity strategy may be very different from a usual legal strategy. Solidarity choices need to be made by the activists, not by the lawyers. The legal team does not make decisions for the protesters, but serves as their messenger and mouthpiece.

Protesters need to understand that legal teams for actions are made up of volunteers who do not have unlimited resources. If solidarity continues for a long time, if it moves into court or cases go to trial, additional legal support will be necessary and so will fundraising to pay for it.

Strategic choices

There are many ways to exercise solidarity, and many choices to make along the way. The key choice that needs to be discussed before the action is:

Stay in jail or not

In-jail solidarity uses our strength of numbers to raise the political and economic costs of the system. It cost the authorities both economically and politically to keep large numbers of people locked up after an action, especially if we can mobilize outside pressure. Large numbers of people in jail can give us lots of leverage with the system. But stay-in-jail strategies are very costly to us, as well. In situations where jail conditions are extremely hazardous to the very life and safety o f protesters, we want to get people out of jail as quickly as possible and mobilize pressure in other ways. In an extended action, or when the authorities use preemptive arrests to undercut our numbers, we may want to get people back on the street quickly. When legal consequences of an action are likely to be minor, an in-jail strategy may not be worth the cost. And people may also have individual reasons for getting out of jail as fast as they can: family responsibilities, medical conditions that put them at risk in a jail situation, work responsibilities, etc.

Stay-in-jail strategies work best with larger numbers, but they do not require unanimity to work. We want to encourage people to do actions whether or not they can stay in jail afterwards. Solidarity is no longer effective movement building if the costs of an action become so high that only the extremely heroic or the chronically unemployed can do actions. When people feel judged or coerced into solidarity stands, they often react against the whole idea and may be reluctant to do future actions. When people feel supported in their choices, they will often make great personal sacrifices to support the group. If we're trying to keep people out on the street for an extended action, we might want to take opportunities to get quickly released from custody. If we have people to protect: individuals who might be singled out, internationals who face immigration issues, etc., we might employ a strategy that involves staying in jail. Or if we are asked to make unacceptable compromises in order to be released, for example, posting high bail or accepting conditions that might prevent us from doing future actions, we ma y need to use in-jail solidarity.

A stay-in-jail solidarity strategy needs some coordination before the action, so that people are prepared and know what choices to make under the stressful conditions of arrest.

How to Stay in Jail:

Refuse to sign out

In mass actions, authorities are often willing to release most people if they sign a promise to appear for a court date, or if they post a reasonable bail. The authorities may also ask people to sign statements saying they will not return to a certain action or area. To stay in jail, refuse to sign or to post bail. Bail is one of the ways the poor are kept incarcerated and people with money get released. Some activists refuse to post bail as part of their moral or political stand. For others, the choice may depend upon the situation.

Refuse to give names: Authorities are generally reluctant to free prisoners without knowing who we are. For this tactic to be effective, protesters should not carry identification to the action. For this reason, it needs to be coordinated ahead of time. This tactic also greatly interferes with the smooth running of the jail system, and is a tactic generally hated by the authorities. It can be a powerful bargaining point in solidarity negotiations. However, it's a bargaining point we most often concede in the end. Protesters should not hold the illusion that they will be able to go through the entire system and be released without giving names. Occasionally this happens, but generally not. Supporters should hold the I.D. of those arrested and be prepared to bring it to jail or court, if necessary. For some activists, giving their name is a matter of pride and principle, a n integral part of their understanding of nonviolence, and of being willing t o stand behind their actions.

Protesters who need medication may not be able to employ this tactic, as generally to receive meds you need a name and a prescription.

Additional tactics

Refuse to cooperate with other aspects of processing: not furnishing information, fingerprints, etc. Refuse to voluntarily go to or cooperate with court appearances or to enter pleas.

Resistance in jail

In jail, many forms of resistance can be employed to protect other protesters from being isolated, singled out, or physically hurt, to pressure the authorities to provide physical necessities, medical care, interpreters , phone calls, access to lawyers, etc. They range from refusing to move voluntarily or cooperate with jail procedures, singing, going limp, physically protecting individuals ('puppy piling'), refusing to answer questions or to speak, fasting, etc. Resistance can be stressful and dangerous, and it's wise to choose your battles and conserve energy for issues that are truly important.

A liaison to the guards is often helpful in jail, as they will feel more comfortable negotiating with one person. However, that role should rotate often so that individuals aren't targeted as leaders. To organize in jail, keep a neutral profile and avoid confronting the guards. Guards fear riots, and are always on the lookout for potential instigators. They will often single out aggressive individuals. Whatever your views are on violence and nonviolence, fighting the guards inside jail will simply get you isolated, hurt, and possibly result in extra charges. Fasting can be a powerful strategic tool, but it will rapidly cloud your judgment and make decision-making extremely difficult. It's most effective when there is outside support and media attention. Consider appointing a 'designated eater' to help care for and monitor the health of fasters.

Resistance inside jail can also be creative. We can use the time to share skills, teach each other organizing tools, hold political discussions, plan the next action. We can also at times share songs, rituals, poems, jokes, stories, and many forms of mutual support and healing. And of course, to hold meetings to decide upon our strategy. But don't meet all the time: endless meetings can be exhausting and counterproductive. Remember that jail cells and phones are monitored. Jail is not the place to regale your fellow protesters with tales of your fifty-three previous arrests. If people are withholding names, try to avoid discussing details that could identify you. Support people should know ahead of time what jail name you will use, so they can be prepared to receive collect calls from 'Muffie'.

Solidarity demands

There are many demands that we might make through solidarity, but generally they involve pressure for equal and fair treatment in jail and in sentencing, for dropped or reduced charges or for a plea bargain we can accept that will not be a deterrent to future actions. The legal system operates like a giant game in which deals are made every day for people's lives. Most people caught in the system do not have the leverage and resources we do. As we negotiate our demands, we will have many choices to make, and we should bear in mind that we may not be able to achieve all of our demands. Pressure for equal treatment or sentencing is most effective when people have all done roughly the same thing.

In most legal systems, there is a big divide between acts considered as freedom of expression and acts of property destruction or aggression. Often the authorities falsely accuse people of violent acts, or charge a victim of their violence with assault o n an officer. When they do not have a solid case, they can often be pressure d to drop or reduce charges. But if they actually have evidence against an individual, they may be unwilling to reduce charges regardless of the strength of our solidarity. If police have been injured or seriously lost face in an action, they may close ranks in their own form of solidarity and become adamantly intent on punishing somebody.

Court and plea solidarity

When we do not choose to use a stay-in-jail strategy, or when we agree to move our solidarity out of jail and into the courts, there are still man y strategies we can use, but the details are more conditioned by the specific legal procedures of each province, state or country. The principles remain the same: strength in numbers, respect for individual choices, coordination not coercion, raising the system's cost, and bringing to bear outside pressure. When individuals are singled out in spite of all our efforts, our solidarity can move to support for them as they face trial, in the form of fundraising, political pressure, courtroom vigils, etc.

Solidarity with other prisoners

The authorities often try to intimidate us by threatening to throw us in with regular prisoners. They may paint fearful and racist pictures of just how bad those other prisoners can be. Most often, however, other prisoners are supportive or at least neutral toward protesters who behave with respect toward them. The criminal justice system in both Canada and the U.S. is more criminal than just, and serves as one of the prime ways poor people, people of color and oppressed groups are kept disenfranchised and disempowered. When we enter into this system as a group of protesters, we hold a privileged level of personal and political power. When we exercise that power, we need to keep in mind the impact of our presence on prisoners who do not have our resources. A jail experience can teach us more in a short time about the true workings of oppression than years of study. We have an obligation to use that knowledge, and our rage, to work for true justice for all prisoners.

[From "Solidarity: A Rough Guide" by Starhawk http://www.stopftaa.org/activist/act_solidarity.html]

Security, Protection, and Self-Defense

Security Practices and Security Culture

Security Culture Basics

Surveillance

Assume you are under surveillance if you are involved in organizing mass direct action or anything illegal, and take precautions. Don't discuss sensitive matters on the telephone, through the mail, by email, or in your home, car or political office/center. Don't talk about anything illegal, even if you are just "joking." Keep written materials and lists of individuals secure and never bring address books to protests where arrest is possible - if you're arrested, the police may investigate all your friends.

Never discuss illegal activity

It is never okay to:

ask about someone else's illegal activities;

discuss your involvement or someone else's involvement with an underground group;

discuss someone else's desire to get involved with such a group;

talk about your participation or someone else's participation in any action that was illegal;

talk about someone else's advocacy for such actions or discuss your plans or someone else's plans for a future action.

The only time it's okay to speak about illegal actions is when you are planning them with the small group of trusted people who will be doing the action with you.

Adopt a Security Culture

Activists organizing mass protests, direct action or anything illegal should make it as difficult as possible for police agencies by adopting a security culture. Activists who are part of a security culture know behaviors that compromise security and quickly educate anyone who acts in a way that violates or threatens security. When all members of a group understand security and correct mistakes, unsecure behavior becomes unacceptable and will stop. This frustrates police surveillance and infiltrators because they can't obtain information or plant it.

People in the scene who gossip, brag or ask for unnecessary information about underground groups or illegal activities are a severe danger to the movement. The first time this happens, take such a person aside and gently educate them in private about why such talk is a danger. Be careful not to preach, injure the individual's pride, or raise defenses and prevent them from absorbing the advise. If an individual repeatedly engages in gossip, bragging and/or seeking unnecessary information about inappropriate topics after repeated educational talks, the person should be removed from any position of trust in movement by being kicked out of meetings, organizations, base camps, etc. Such a person is a grave risk at best, and a police agent looking to provoke or entrap others at worst.

Infiltrators

Infiltrators attempt to get information about organizations, disrupt them by creating splits and disorganization in meetings and in individual's lives, and entrap activists by urging insecure illegal activity. They often disrupt groups, ironically, by promoting destructive witch hunts for infiltrators! Carefully check out the authenticity of any disturbing letter, rumor, phone call etc. before acting on it. Ask the supposed source if she or he is responsible. Don't try to expose a suspected agent or informer without solid proof. It generally works better to criticize what a disruptive person says and does without speculating as to why. Avoid entrapment by only doing illegal direct action with people you know well and trust. Avoid government-sponsored splits in movement groups by dealing openly and honestly with differences within our movements in race, gender, class, sexual orientation, etc. before the FBI can exploit them.

[From "Security Culture", Slingshot Issue #72, http://slingshot.tao.ca/ with modifications by the editor.]

From "COINTELPRO: The Danger We Face"

Infiltration by Agents or Informers

Agents are law enforcement officers disguised as activists.

Informers are non-agents who provide information to a law enforcement or intelligence agency. They may be recruited from within a group or sent in by an agency, or they may be disaffected former members or supporters.

Infiltrators are agents or informers who work in a group or community under the direction of a law enforcement or intelligence agency. During the 60s the FBI had to rely on informers (who are less well-trained and harder to control) because it had very few Black, Hispanic, or female agents, and its strict dress and grooming code left white male agents unable to look like activists. As a modern equal opportunity employer, today's FBI has fewer such limitations.

What They Do

Some informers and infiltrators quietly provide information while keeping a low profile and doing whatever is expected of group members. Others attempt to discredit a target and disrupt its work. They may spread false rumors and make unfounded accusations to provoke or exacerbate tensions and splits. They may urge divisive proposals, sabotage important activities and resources, or operate as "provocateurs" who lead zealous activists into unnecessary danger. In a demonstration or other confrontation with police, such an agent may break discipline and call for actions which would undermine unity and detract from tactical focus.

Infiltration As a Source of Distrust and Paranoia

While individual agents and informers aid the government in a variety of specific ways, the general use of infiltrators serves a very special and powerful strategic function. The fear that a group may be infiltrated often intimidates people from getting more involved. It can give rise to a paranoia which makes it difficult to build the mutual trust which political groups depend on. This use of infiltration, enhanced by covertly-initiated rumors that exaggerate the extent to which a particular movement or group has been penetrated, is recommended by the manuals used to teach counterinsurgency in the US and Western Europe.

Cover Manipulation to Make a Legitimate Activist Appear to Be an Agent

An actual agent will often point the finger at a genuine, non-collaborating and highly valued group member, claiming that he or she is the infiltrator. The same effect, known as a "snitch jacket", has been achieved by planting forged documents which appear to be communications between an activist and the FBI, or by releasing for no other apparent reason one of a group of activists who were arrested together. Another method used under COINTELPRO was to arrange for some activists, arrested under one pretext or another, to hear over the police radio a phony broadcast which appeared to set up a secret meeting between the police and someone from their group.

Guidelines for Coping with Infiltration

1. Establish a process through which anyone who suspects an informer (or other form of covert intervention) can express his or her fears without scaring others. Experienced people assigned this responsibility can do a great deal to help a group maintain its morale and focus while, at the same time, centrally consolidating information and deciding how to use it. This plan works best when accompanied by group discussion of the danger of paranoia, so that everyone understands and follows the established procedure.

2. To reduce vulnerability to paranoia and "snitch jackets", and to minimize diversion from your main work, it generally is best if you do not attempt to expose a suspected agent or informer unless you are certain of their role (For instance, they surface to make an arrest, testify as a government witness or in some other way admit their identity). Under most circumstances, an attempted exposure will do more harm than the infiltrator's continued presence. This is especially true if you can discreetly limit the suspect's access to funds, financial records, mailing lists, discussions of possible law violations, meetings that plan criminal defense strategy, and similar opportunities.

3. Deal openly and directly with the form and content of what anyone says and does, whether the person is a

suspected agent, has emotional problems, or is simply a sincere, but naive or confused person new to the work.

4. Once an agent or informer has been definitely identified, alert other groups and communities by means of photographs, a description of their methods of operation, etc. In the 60s, some agents managed even after their exposure in one community to move on and repeat their performance in a number of others.

5. Be careful to avoid pushing a new or hesitant member to take risks beyond what that person is ready to handle, particularly in situations which could result in arrest and prosecution. People in this position have proved vulnerable to recruitment as informers.

Other Forms of Deception

Bogus leaflets, pamphlets, etc.:

COINTELPRO documents show that the FBI routinely put out phony leaflets, posters, pamphlets, etc. to
discredit its targets. In one instance, agents revised a children's coloring book which the Black Panther Party had rejected as anti-white and gratuitously violent, and then distributed a cruder version to backers of the Party's program of free breakfasts for children, telling them the book was being used in the program.

False media stories:

The FBI's documents expose collusion by reporters and news media that knowingly published false and
distorted material prepared by Bureau agents. One such story had Jean Seberg, a noticeably pregnant white film star

active in anti-racist causes, carrying the child of a prominent Black leader. Seberg's white husband, the actual father, has sued the FBI as responsible for her resulting stillbirth, breakdown, and suicide.

Forged correspondence:

Former employees have confirmed that the FBI and CIA have the capacity to produce "state of the art" forgery. The US Senate's investigation of COINTELPRO uncovered a series of letters forged in the name of an intermediary between the Black Panther Party's national office and Panther leader Eldridge Cleaver, in exile in Algeria. The letters proved instrumental in inflaming intra-party rivalries that erupted into the bitter public split that shattered the Party in the winter of 1971.

Anonymous letters and telephone calls:

During the 60s, activists received a steady flow of anonymous letters and phone calls which turn out to have been from government agents. Some threatened violence. Others promoted racial divisions and fears. Still others charged various leaders with collaboration, corruption, sexual affairs with other activists' mates, etc. As in the Seberg incident, inter-racial sex was a persistent theme. The husband of one white woman involved in a bi-racial civil rights group received the following anonymous letter authored by the FBI:

"Look, man, I guess your old lady doesn't get enough at home or she wouldn't be shucking and jiving with our Black Men in ACTION, you dig? Like all she wants to integrate is the bedroom and us Black Sisters ain't gonna take no second best from our men. So lay it on her man -- or get her the hell off [NAME]."

--A Soul Sister

False rumors:

Using infiltrators, journalists and other contacts, the Bureau circulated slanderous, disruptive rumors through political movements and the communities in which they worked.

Other misinformation:

A favorite FBI tactic uncovered by Senate investigators was to misinform people that a political meeting or event had been canceled. Another was to offer nonexistent housing at phony addresses, stranding out-of-town conference attendees who naturally blamed those who had organized the event. FBI agents also arranged to transport demonstrators in the name of a bogus bus company which pulled out at the last minute. Such "dirty tricks" interfered with political events and turned activists against each other.

Fronts for the FBI:

COINTELPRO documents reveal that a number of 60s political groups and projects were actually set up and operated by the FBI.

One, "Grupo pro-Uso Voto", was used to disrupt the fragile unity developing in 1967 among groups seeking Puerto Rico's independence from the US. The genuine proponents of independence had joined together to boycott a US-administered referendum on the island's status. They argued that voting under conditions of colonial domination could serve only to legitimize US rule, and that no vote could be fair while the US controlled the island's economy, media, schools, and police. The bogus group, pretending to support independence, broke ranks and urged independistas to take advantage of the opportunity to register their opinion at the polls.

Since FBI front groups are basically a means for penetrating and disrupting political movements, it is best to deal with them on the basis of the Guidelines for Coping with Infiltration (below).

Confront what a suspect group says and does, but avoid public accusations unless you have definite proof. If you do have such proof, share it with everyone affected.

Guidelines for Coping with Other Forms of Deception:

1. Don't add unnecessarily to the pool of information that government agents use to divide political groups and turn activists against each other. They thrive on gossip about personal tensions, rivalries and disagreements. The more these are aired in public, or via a telephone which can be tapped or mail which can be opened, the easier it is to exploit a group's problems and subvert its work (Note that the CIA has the technology to read mail without opening it, and that the telephone network can now be programmed to record any conversation in which specific political terms are used).

2. The best way to reduce tensions and hostilities, and the urge to gossip about them, is to make time for open, honest discussion and resolution of "personal" as well as "political" issues.

3. Don't accept everything you hear or read. Check with the supposed source of the information before you act on it. Personal communication among estranged activists, however difficult or painful, could have countered many FBI operations which proved effective in the 60s.

4. When you hear a negative, confusing or potentially harmful rumor, don't pass it on. Instead, discuss it with a trusted friend or with the people in your group who are responsible for dealing with covert intervention.

5. Verify and double-check all arrangements for housing, transportation, meeting rooms, and so forth.

6. When you discover bogus materials, false media stories, etc. publicly disavow them and expose the true sources, insofar as you can.

Harassment, Intimidation and Violence:

Pressure through employers, landlords, etc.

COINTELPRO documents reveal frequent overt contacts and covert manipulation (false rumors, anonymous letters and telephone calls) to generate pressure on activists from their parents, landlords, employers, college administrators, church superiors, welfare agencies, credit bureaus, licensing authorities, and the like.

Agents' reports indicate that such intervention denied 60s activists any number of foundation grants and public speaking engagements. It also cost underground newspapers most of their advertising revenues, when major record companies were persuaded to take their business elsewhere. It may underlie recent steps by insurance companies to cancel policies held by churches giving sanctuary to refugees from El Salvador and Guatemala.

Burglary

Former operatives have confessed to thousands of "black bag jobs" in which FBI agents broke into movement offices to steal, copy, or destroy valuable papers, wreck equipment, or plant drugs.

Vandalism

FBI infiltrators have admitted countless other acts of vandalism, including the fire which destroyed the Watts Writers Workshop's multimillion-dollar ghetto cultural center in 1973. Late 60s FBI and police raids laid waste to movement offices across the country, destroying precious printing presses, typewriters, layout equipment, research files, financial records, and mailing lists.

Other direct interference

To further disrupt opposition movements, frighten activists, and get people upset with each other, the FBI
tampered with organizational mail, so it came late or not at all. It also resorted to bomb threats and similar "dirty tricks".

Conspicuous surveillance

The FBI and police blatantly watch activists' homes, follow their cars, tap phones, open mail and attend political events. The object is not to collect information (which is done surreptitiously), but to harass and intimidate.

Attempted interviews

Agents have extracted damaging information from activists who don't known they have a legal right to refuse to talk, or who think they can outsmart the FBI. COINTELPRO directives recommend attempts at interviews throughout political movements to "enhance the paranoia endemic in these circles" and "get the point that there is an FBI agent behind every mailbox."

Grand juries

Unlike the FBI, the Grand Jury has legal power to make you answer its questions. Those who refuse, and are required to accept immunity from use of their testimony against them, can be jailed for contempt of court (Such "use immunity" enables prosecutors to get around the constitutional protection against self-incrimination).

The FBI and US Department of Justice have manipulated this process to turn the grand jury into an instrument of political repression. Frustrated by jurors' consistent refusal to convict activists of overtly political crimes, they convened over 100 grand juries between 1970 and 1973 and subpoenaed more than 1,000 activists from the Black, Puerto Rican, student, women's and anti-war movements. Supposed pursuit of fugitives and "terrorists" was the usual pretext. Many targets were so terrified that they dropped out of political activity. Others were jailed without any criminal charge or trial, in what amounts to a US version of the political internment procedures employed in South Africa and Northern Ireland.

False arrest and prosecution

COINTELPRO directives cite the Philadelphia FBI's success in having local militants "arrested on every possible charge until they could no longer make bail" and "spent most of the summer in jail." Though the bulk of the activists arrested in this manner were eventually released, some were convicted on serious charges on the basis of perjured testimony by FBI agents, or by coworkers who the Bureau had threatened or bribed.

The object was not only to remove experienced organizers from their communities and to divert scarce resources into legal defense, but even more to discredit entire movements by portraying their leaders as vicious criminals. Two victims of such frame-ups, Native American activist Leonard Peltier and 1960s Black Panther official Elmer "Geronimo" Pratt, have finally gained court hearings on new trial motions.

Others currently struggling to re-open COINTELPRO convictions include Richard Marshall of the American Indian Movement and jailed black Panthers Herman Bell, Anthony Bottom, Albert Washington (the "NY3"), and Richard "Dhoruba" Moore.

Intimidation

One COINTELPRO communiqué urged that "The Negro youths and moderates must be made to understand that if they succumb to revolutionary teaching, they will be dead revolutionaries."

Others reported use of threats (anonymous and overt) to terrorize activists, driving some to abandon promising projects and others to leave the country. During raids on movement offices, the FBI and police routinely roughed up activists and threatened further violence. In August, 1970, they forced the entire staff of the Black Panther office in Philadelphia to march through the streets naked.

Instigation of violence

The FBI's infiltrators and anonymous notes and phone calls incited violent rivals to attack Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, and other targets. Bureau records also reveal maneuvers to get the Mafia to move against such activists as black comedian Dick Gregory.

A COINTELPRO memo reported that "shootings, beatings and a high degree of unrest continue to prevail in the ghetto area of southeast San Diego... it is felt that a substantial amount of the unrest is directly attributable to this program."

Covert aid to right-wing vigilantes

In the guise of a COINTELPRO against "white hate groups," the FBI subsidized, armed, directed and protected the Ku Klux Klan and other right-wing groups, including a "Secret Army Organization" of California ex-Minutemen who beat up Chicano activists, tore apart the offices of the San Diego Street Journal and the Movement for a Democratic Military, and tried to kill a prominent anti-war organizer. Puerto Rican activists suffered similar terrorist assaults from anti-Castro Cuban groups organized and funded by the CIA.

Defectors from a band of Chicago-based vigilantes known as the "Legion of Justice" disclosed that the funds and arms they used to destroy bookstores, film studios, and other centers of opposition had secretly been supplied by members of the Army's 113th Military Intelligence Group.

Assassination

The FBI and police were implicated directly in murders of Black and Native American leaders. In Chicago, police assassinated Black Panthers Fred Hampton and Mark Clark, using a floor plan supplied by an FBI informer who apparently also had drugged Hampton's food to make him unconscious during the raid.

FBI records show that this accomplice received a substantial bonus for his services. Despite an elaborate cover-up, a blue-ribbon commission and a US Court of Appeals found the deaths to be the result not of a shootout, as claimed by police, but of a carefully orchestrated, Vietnam-style "search and destroy mission."

Guidelines for Coping with Harassment, Intimidation Violence

1. Establish security procedures appropriate to your group's level of activity and discuss them thoroughly with everyone involved. Control access to keys, files, letterhead, funds, financial records, mailing lists, etc. Keep duplicates of valuable documents. Safeguard address books, and do not carry them when arrest is likely.

2. Careful records of break-ins, thefts, bomb threats, raids, arrests, strange phone noises (not always taps or bugs), harassment, etc. will help you to discern patterns and to prepare reports and testimony.

3. Don't talk to the FBI. Don't let them in without a warrant. Tell others that they came. Have a lawyer demand an explanation and instruct them to leave you alone.

4. If an activist does talk, or makes some other honest error, explain the harm that could result. But do not attempt to ostracize a sincere person who slips up. Isolation only weakens a person's ability to resist. It can drive someone out of the movement and even into the arms of the police.

5. If the FBI starts to harass people in your area, alert everyone to refuse to cooperate. Set up community meetings with speakers who have resisted similar harassment elsewhere. Get literature, films, etc. Consider "Wanted" posters with photos of the agents, or guerrilla theater which follows them through the city streets.

6. Make a major issue of crude harassment, such as tampering with your mail. Contact your congressperson. Call the media. Demonstrate at your local FBI office. Turn the attack into an opportunity for explaining how covert intervention threatens fundamental human rights.

7. Many people find it easier to tell an FBI agent to contact their lawyer than to refuse to talk. Once a lawyer is involved, the Bureau generally pulls back, since it has lost its power to intimidate. If possible, make arrangements with a local lawyer and let everyone know that agents who visit them can be referred to that lawyer. If your group engages in civil disobedience or finds itself under intense police pressure, start a bail fund, train some members to deal with the legal system, and develop and ongoing relationship with a sympathetic local lawyer.

8. Community education is important, along with legal, financial, child care, and other support for those who protect a movement by refusing to divulge information about it. If a respected activist is subpoenaed for obviously political reasons, consider trying to arrange for sanctuary in a local church or synagogue.

9. While the FBI and police are entirely capable of fabricating criminal charges, any law violations make it easier for them to set you up. The point is not to get so uptight and paranoid that you can't function, but to make a realistic assessment based on your visibility and other pertinent circumstances.

10. Upon hearing of Fred Hampton's murder, the Black Panthers in Los Angeles fortified their offices and organized a communications network to alert the community and news media in the event of a raid. When the police did attempt an armed assault four days later, the Panthers were able to hold off the attack until a large community and media presence enabled them to leave the office without casualties. Similar preparation can help other groups that have reason to expect right-wing or police assaults.

11. Make sure your group designates and prepares other members to step in if leaders are jailed or otherwise incapacitated. The more each participant is able to think for herself or himself and take responsibility, the better will be the group's capacity to cope with crises.

Organizing Public Opposition to Covert Intervention

A Broad-Based Strategy

No one existing political organization or movement is strong enough, by itself, to mobilize the public pressure required to significantly limit the ability of the FBI, CIA and police to subvert our work. Some activists oppose covert intervention because it violates fundamental constitutional rights. Others stress how it weakens and interferes with the work of a particular group or movement. Still others see covert action as part of a political and economic system which is fundamentally flawed. Our only hope is to bring these diverse forces together in a single, powerful alliance.

Such a broad coalition cannot hold together unless it operates with clearly-defined principles. The coalition as a whole will have to oppose covert intervention on certain basic grounds -- such as the threat to democracy, civil liberties and social justice, leaving its members free to put forward other objections and analyses in their own names. Participants will need to refrain from insisting that only their views are "politically correct" and that everyone else has "sold out."

Above all, we will have to resist the government's maneuvers to divide us by moving against certain groups, while subtly suggesting that it will go easy on the others, if only they dissociate themselves from those under attack. This strategy is evident in the recent Executive Order and Guidelines, which single out for infiltration and disruption people who support liberation movements and governments that defy US hegemony or who entertain the view that it may be at times necessary to break the law in order to effectuate social change.

Diverse Tactics

For maximum impact, local and national coalitions will need a multifaceted approach which effectively combines a diversity of tactics, including:

1. Investigative research to stay on top of, and document, just what the FBI, CIA, and police are up to.

2. Public education through forums, rallies, radio and TV, literature, film, high school and college curricula, wall posters, guerrilla theater, and whatever else proves interesting and effective.

3. Legislative lobbying against administration proposals to strengthen cover work, cut back public access to information, punish government "whistle-blowers", etc. Coalitions in some cities and states have won legislative restrictions on surveillance and covert action. The value of such victories will depend on our ability to mobilize continuing, vigilant public pressure for effective enforcement.

4. Support for the victims of covert intervention can reduce somewhat the harm done by the FBI, CIA, and police. Organizing on behalf of grand jury resisters, political prisoners, and defendants in political trials offers a natural forum for public education about domestic covert action.

5. Lawsuits may win financial compensation for some of the people harmed by covert intervention. Covert action suits, which seek a court order (injunction) limiting surveillance and covert action in a particular city or judicial district, have proved a valuable source of information and publicity. They are enormously expensive, however, in terms of time and energy as well as money. Out-of-court

settlements in some of these cases have given rise to bitter disputes which split coalitions apart, and any agreement is subject to reinterpretation or modification by increasingly conservative, administration-oriented federal judges.

The US Court of Appeals in Chicago has ruled that the consent decree against the FBI there affects only operations based "solely on the political views of a group or an individual," for which the Bureau can conjure no pretext of a "genuine concern for law enforcement."

6. Direct action, in the form of citizens' arrests, mock trials, picketlines, and civil disobedience, has recently greeted CIA recruiters on a number of college campuses. Although the main focus has been on the Agency's international crimes, its domestic activities has also received attention. Similar actions might be organized to protest recruitment by the FBI and police, in conjunction with teach-ins and other education about domestic covert action. Demonstrations against Reagan's attempts to bolster covert intervention, or against particular FBI, CIA or police operations, could also raise public consciousness and focus activists' outrage.

Prospects

Previous attempts to mobilize public opposition, especially on a local level, indicate that a broad coalition, employing a multifaceted approach, may be able to impose some limits on the government's ability to discredit and disrupt our work. It is clear, however, that we currently lack the power to eliminate such intervention. While fighting hard to end domestic covert action, we need also to study the forms it takes and prepare ourselves to cope with it as effectively as we can. Above all, it is essential that we resist the temptation to so preoccupy ourselves with repression that we neglect our main work. Our ability to resist the government's attacks depends ultimately on the strength of our movements.

* * *

Choosing Your Friends Wisely for Illegal Activities

We need to stress the importance of choosing your "friends" wisely. As we have seen, even cell members can turn into informers when the heat is on and fear has taken over their reasoning. Here are a few words on how to better choose the people that you take action with:

Don't work with individuals who are involved in other criminal activity, especially if it is violent in nature. When these people are caught for unrelated activity, they will (and have) snitched on their cell-mates to avoid other charges.

Don't work with people who are not committed to the cause. When the stakes are high -- as it is with any illegal Direct Action -- trust your gut. If you are uncomfortable with any potential cell member -- don't work with them. PERIOD.

Don't allow trusted friends to "vouch" for others. You should have first hand experience working with every cell member before even approaching the subject of illegal Direct Action with him or her. Oftentimes friends are blinded to their friend's quirks, which might point to the fact that s/he is just plain not suited for this activity.

Try to imagine potential cell-mates -- and yourself – after they are caught and are being interrogated: How would they respond? Would the fear cause them to break? Could they handle the pressure of jail time or their parents?

And once a person finds people they think are of a high enough caliber to work with, next you want to:

Make sure every one of them is familiar with police interrogation techniques and procedures so they can spot the lies of the authorities should they be apprehended.

Make sure they all are ready to go to jail for 5 to 10 years, if the worst happens. All cell-mates should be able to discuss what would be the hardest thing for them to cope with should that happen -- i.e. supporting children or non-human family members, pressure from parents to capitulate, fear of being beaten in jail or whatever. Beware of those activists who are so "hard" and say they could do jail time no problem - people like this turn out to be all talk way too quickly.

Finally, even though it sounds strange, the cell should partake in some sort of ritual where everyone promises to other cell members to never talk to anyone (friends, lovers, cops, etc.) about the action, and that all information will never leave the confines of the active cell. This sort of "blood sibling" type ritual might be the one thing that helps weaker people through a hard spot after an arrest. It is important that all participants in an action know what's expected from them if the shit should hit the fan.

[From "Choosing Your Friends Wisely" by the Animal Liberation Front http://www.animalliberation.net/security/friends.html]

Mail Security

It should come as no surprise to activists as it's a tactic they've done thousands of times to hundreds of politically active groups. The information gleaned from letter opening's and seizure's can obviously give the police more targets for surveillance and harassment. This should be a big reminder to us that if people involved in any type of underground work and want to send a Supporters Group or any similar group mail, that your security should be of the utmost concern.

Do not include any information which could gives clues about anyone's identity; Names, return addresses, gender. Send your reports on plain every day paper (don't use your favorite note pad) and common envelopes. Either do all writing using all block capital letters with a common pen, use a stencil, use a public typewriter or a public computer. Wear gloves always so that your fingerprints are not on the paper, envelope, or stamp (be careful of fiber traces). Do not lick the envelope or stamp -- wet it with a sponge. Other suggestions include using self stick stamps and tape to seal envelopes.

The following is a secure method that can be revised to fit your needs.

Go to a college/university/school/photo-copy/library shop and type up a press release on a typewriter or computer (make sure you do not save a copy anywhere on your disk or on the computer it self) and print a copy. Make sure to watch for people reading over your shoulder, try to work when it isn't to busy. You will also want to make a sheet with the mailing address's of where you are sending letters to.

Alternately methods include: Cut and paste letters from a magazine or newspaper just make sure you destroy what ever you cut up. Use a common, stencil ruler or paper stencils available from a stationary store.

Go to your local public photo copier, bring two extra pieces of paper with you or find two pieces of paper from their recycling bin, garbage, etc. Place one piece down on the tray where your copies come out. Make as many copies as you need to send out and make sure you DO NOT touch them. Place your other piece of paper down on top, making sure not to touch any of the papers in between. Keep your original separate (as it probably has your fingerprints on it) so you can burn it as soon as possible.

Buy a packet of 10 (more if you need them) envelopes wrapped in cellophane at any corner store and also buy a packet of pre-packaged (preferably self stick ones) stamps. Burn the receipts when you get home.

Take your copies home where you can put on gloves and remove the outer pages. Now before you get too far, make sure the area your work area is clean. Now days the threat of DNA is very real. If you have long hair tie it back, if you have short hair wear a hat. You DO NOT want a hair (yours, anyone else's, even companion animals inside an envelope or under a stamp) or any other traceable fiber's from your sweater, gloves, etc. Seal the envelopes and attach stamps using a clean new sponge, DO NOT lick them. Address them using a common bic pen and use all straight line/block capitals. Or cut the address's out of the copy you made and paste on using a common glue.

Place all of you letters inside another larger manila type envelope. Take your gloves off destroy any extra envelope's and stamps. Now go to a mail box as far as possible from your home, preferably another city or town and dump the contents of the large envelope into the mail box. Destroy the larger envelope.

Some of the above may seem a fair bit extreme, but if it saves you from going to prison it's worth any extra time and money.

[From "Mail Security: Some Important Tips" by the Animal Liberation Front http://www.animalliberation.net/security/secureletter.html]

Warning Signs of Covert Eavesdropping or Bugging

You have noticed strange sounds or volume changes on your phone lines.
You have noticed static, popping, or scratching on your phone lines.
You can hear sounds coming from your phone's handset when it's hung up.
Your phone often rings and nobody is there or a tone/beep is heard.
Your radio or television has suddenly developed strange interference.
Secret meetings and/or bids seem to be less than secret.
People seem to know your activities when they shouldn't.

You have been the victim of a burglary, but nothing was taken.
Electrical wall plates appear to have been moved slightly or "jarred."
Dime-sized discoloration has suddenly appeared on the wall paint.
White dry-wall dust/debris is noticed on the floor next to the wall.
Small pieces of ceiling tiles, or "grit" is noticed on the floor, or on the surface area of your desk.
Nails and screws previously covered with paint are scraped off or loose.
You notice that the phone company trucks/"employees" are spending a lot of time doing repair work near your home or office.
Telephone, cable, plumbing, or air conditioning repair people show up to do work when no one had called them.
Your door locks suddenly don't "feel right" or are broken.
Furniture has been moved slightly, and no one knows why.
Service or delivery trucks are often parked nearby with nobody in them.
Things "seem" to have been rummaged through, but nothing is missing.
Certain types of items have "just appeared" in your office of home, but nobody seems to know how they got there.
Indoor pets are mysteriously let outside.

Computer Security

Computer security is a very broad subject and computer technology changes so quickly that to recommend any particular technology definitively would make this document quickly obsolete. Therefore I have decided to provide links to very useful computer security sites and "The Campaigners' Computer Maintenance Mantra" which provides the essential information that every activist should now about maintaining basic computer security.

http://security.tao.ca/ -- Helping activists stay safe in our oppressive world.

http://seussbeta.tripod.com/ -- The whole world is watching. You can defend yourself.

Federal Guidelines for Searching and Seizing Computers
http://www.usdoj.gov/criminal/cybercrime/searching.html

The Campaigners' Computer Maintenance Mantra
By Paul Mobbs <mobbsey@gn.apc.org>
with modifications by the editor

This is my computer. There are many like it but this one is mine.

My computer is my campaigning tool. Campaigns are my life.

I must master my computer as I must master my life.

Without me my computer is nothing.

Without my computer my campaigns are nothing.

I must protect my computer. I must secure the building and the room it is in.

I must prevent thieves or private investigators stealing my data and my computer.

I must connect my equipment to a single power point to isolate it with one switch.

I must disconnect my modem when it is not in use.

I must maintain my computer to keep it operating efficiently.

I must regularly conduct system maintenance to prevent errors.

Every month I must check my system for viruses.

I will scan the file system for errors. I will de-fragment the drives if they need it.

I will check the operating system for itinerant temporary files and delete them.

I will delete or copy onto disks unwanted or surplus files in my work area.

I must back up my data REGULARLY.

'Regularly' means when I finish major work or do system maintenance.

I will secure my backed up data in a place where it is safe from fire and theft.

In case of raids I will occasionally give copies of my back ups to trusted friends.

Before shutting down I will always check that the backed up files are readable.

I will practice computer security better than I practice safe sex.

I will check any files received by email or on disk for viruses.

I will not execute any new programs before they have been scanned for viruses.

I will disable all the macros of any documents I receive before opening them.

As a campaigner who uses a computer this mantra will guide my life.

My computer and myself are defenders of the Earth and Humanity.

Those who would destroy the world have better computers than we do.

But we will win because we have superior morals and motivation.

So be it until we dance on the ruins of the multinational corporations,

and an anarchist society is attained.

Police Tactics and Your Legal Rights

Investigators' Dirty Tricks

This article will show you the tricks that federal, state and local investigators use to encourage you to give up your right to remain silent. It is intended to prepare you for their underhanded ways while stressing the importance of not talking or trying to deceive them.

Do not communicate with any agents. To begin with, it is a federal crime to make a false statement to an FBI agent or other federal investigator. By talking, you may be digging your own grave as a violation could be charged on the basis of two inconsistent statements spoken out of fear or forgetfulness.

It is also very dangerous to try and outsmart them. They are trained on how to extract information out of people, and in tripping people up who are lying to them. They have learned how to get people to talk by making them feel scared, guilty or impolite. They exploit our trust, honesty and sensitive nature to get information and further harass us. They would prefer you lied to them than not talk, so stay strong and stay silent!

Below, is a list of the arsenal of dirty tricks investigators use against activists to get them to talk:

"Your friends have told us everything; why don't you just come clean." They will act as if your friends have already snitched on you, making you want to snitch on them in return. It's generally a lie -- besides, even if that did happen, how does it benefit you to be a witness against yourself?

"If you don't talk now, we will come back with a subpoena." Most of the time this is an empty threat. They approach you without a subpoena because they don't have enough evidence against you to justify getting a subpoena from the courts. If you talk, they might get that needed evidence,so its best to stay quiet. Make them get a subpoena. At least ninety percent of the time, they simply won't do it. But if they do, there are legal and political ways to challenge the subpoena.

"If you talk, we will go easy on you." Agents will promise you the world to get you to talk. However, when they have people sign statements of guilt, notice they never sign anything saying they will stay true to their promises. They lie. Don't believe their promises.

"We know everything you've done and have all the evidence we need to convict you." If this was the case, they would go ahead and charge you with a crime and convict you. Most of the time it's a lie, but sometimes they will show or tell you the "evidence" they have against you. This "evidence" will often have been obtained illegally -- meaning it cannot be used in court -- or be lies like "we found your prints on the glass" that they hope are correct enough to scare you. They show and tell you about this "evidence" in the hopes that you will break down and confess everything. Because – although their lies and illegally obtained "evidence" cannot be used in court -- your confession can. And they will use that as the main evidence to convict you. The moral of the story is say nothing.

"You seem to be an intelligent kid with a promising future. You don't want to destroy your life over this, do you?" They act as if they are really concerned about your welfare and are just trying to help. But, for some reason, they can't help you unless you help them by talking. The truth is, they don't care. This is just another way to manipulate you to talk.

"These extremists hurt your movement. They alienate people and make them angry. Help your cause by telling us who they are." These "extremists" are winning so many victories that the repressive, status-quo loving government can't handle it and have sent their agents in to crush the "extremists" -- be they illegal or legal. They are trying to use your own desire to help the cause against your fellow comrades. This line rarely works among grassroots militants who know how effective we are, but it is another trick we should be aware of.

"I support your goals, just not your (friends') tactics" or "my daughter's a left-winger." Again, they will try to act as if they support your cause, but that they have to uphold the law -- and can't you help a fellow traveler? If they really supported us, they wouldn't harass those activists who work legally to change the system. Turning in fellow warriors helps no one.

"If you are not guilty, then why don't you talk?" This is one of their most used tactics. We all have the desire to defend ourselves, especially when we know we are innocent. However, they will attack and dissect everything you say, continually prying to get more and more information -- and if you stop answering their questions because they get out of line, they will say, "A ha! So now you don't want to talk? It seems we have found the flaw in your story!" and again try to make you feel guilty and rekindle your desire to vindicate yourself. But even if you are innocent, don't talk! An activist's innocence has never stopped the authorities from convicting or jailing them. Furthermore, the more you talk, the more likely you are to mention other people's names, leading the police to more people who they can harass and question.

"Your supposed friends are laughing at you. They manipulated you into doing these things and now you're taking the fall for it while they get off scott free. They used you and now they are laughing at you." Investigators will try to pit you against the real or imagined "others" who they think you conspired with. They will say your alleged "coconspirators" used you, manipulated you, and deserted you. And then they will ask you why you are willing to protect such worthless people who have been so abusive to you and don't care that you were caught and face years of prison. They are trying to create doubts in your mind about the other members of your affinity group while giving you reasons to justify informing on them. Again, this is pure manipulation, so don't talk. However, it is good to make sure your affinity group is made up of people who you fully trust and respect, so that you could never believe such lies by the authorities.

Repeatedly asking the same question. Agents will ask the same question in different ways numerous times. This is how they can usually trip up those people who are trying to outsmart them. It also helps them weed out more information from those who are telling the truth, but being stingy with their answers. And sometimes it just simply wears down those people who are not telling the truth, so that finally they come clean. Don't ever think that investigators are going to just ask you a few questions and let you go. The more you give, the more they take, and once you start talking they will do whatever it takes to keep you talking.

Good cop/bad cop. This is their oldest trick in the book. It allows one officer to use all of the above listed plays that are negative (like threats), while the other one uses the positive scams (like promises). It allows them to use their full arsenal on you. Sometimes the Bad Cop acts so angry and unstable that you fear they will use physical violence against you. The Good Cop then ushers the Bad Cop out of the room to "cool off." Then the Good Cop warms up to you, and promises you a light sentence if you talk, however if you don't talk, the Good Cop fears that the Bad Cop will come back and make good on her/his threats of violence -- so just admit your guilt so you can avoid that. Again these are usually empty threats, but just be prepared for the Good Cop/Bad Cop ruse.

[From "Investigators' Dirty Tricks" by the Animal Liberation Front http://www.animalliberation.net/security/dirty.html]

Walking through a Grand Jury

In this article Attorney Larry Weiss walks us through a typical grand jury proceeding for an activist. He shows how easily a committed activist who puts their cause first can be jailed at a grand jury. His article is quite scary. Think about it, when they start asking you about your friends, their beliefs in direct action, your significant other, your involvement with radical groups, who you associate with, and other personal questions, are you going answer them?

If you do, you can bet the people you mention will also be harassed; they will have more information to use against you, your friends, and the movement; and mistrust and fear will spread within the movement because no one knows what you said about them (the public is not allowed and grand jury hearings). In a grand jury, there are no innocent questions, and there is no such thing as a harmless answer. Cooperating with a special grand jury is selling out the movement.

But if you don't answer their personal, sometimes intimate questions, you face up to 18 months in jail without even a trial.

The following is a summary of what you might expect to encounter if you are subpoenaed to appear before a federal grand jury.

1. Your subpoena will be served on you by law enforcement personnel or FBI agents. Do not attempt to talk to the person who serves the subpoena, or explain why you should not be involved. They will only use your statements against you.

2. Don't panic. There are organizations that deal with just such situations. Don't be afraid to get in touch with such organizations or with an attorney who is experienced in grand jury matters. Tell them about your subpoena. The

worst thing that you can do is isolate yourself or give up hope.

3. You will have to go to the building (probably a courthouse) where the grand jury is located on the day and time mentioned on your subpoena. Take friends and/or an attorney with you. Again, do not isolate yourself. The FBI would like nothing better than for you to feel alone and helpless.

4. After you arrive at the courthouse you will probably have to sit and wait for one or several hours. Then you will go into the grand jury room. Your attorney and your friends will not be allowed to go in with you. Although your attorney can not come into the grand jury room, he or she may wait outside the room. You may go out of the room to consult with your attorney as often as you like.

Simply tell the U.S. Attorney, "I need to talk with my attorney". You may want to go out after each question (and before answering) to talk with your attorney. That is your right and, if the U.S. Attorney will not let you go, then simply refuse to say anything until you are allowed to talk with your attorney.

5. You will be asked your name, followed by a short series of innocent-sounding questions. Finally, the real inquisition will begin. You will be asked about people you may or may not know, who they are and what their political views are. You may be asked to identify pictures of people, or whether you attended meetings or demonstrations with them. There is no "right to remain silent" in front of a grand jury. Most people will want to take the Fifth Amendment to avoid testifying. If you decide that you want to take the Fifth Amendment, you should do so as soon as you have given

your name. People often think that they can outsmart the government attorney who is asking the questions, but this is not wise. If you have already answered some questions on the same subject that you now want to refuse to answer, you may end up waiving your right to take the Fifth Amendment.

6. To take the Fifth Amendment you simply say "I refuse to answer on the ground that it may tend to incriminate me" or you can simply say "I take the Fifth Amendment on this question." Then you simply repeat that for each question.

7. After you have taken the Fifth Amendment for one or several questions, the U.S. Attorney may ask you to go in front of a judge. When he/she mentions this, and if you are not represented by an attorney, you should ask for a public defender to represent you.

You will then go before a U.S. District Court judge. This hearing, where you are given immunity despite all of your objections, is called the immunity hearing. If you have not been given a public defender, tell the judge that you want a public defender and that you have already asked the U.S. attorney for one. The judge may or may not comply with your request for a public defender.

The judge will ask you if you have taken the Fifth Amendment and you reply "yes". The U.S. Attorney may then offer you "immunity". This means that anything you say in front of the grand jury cannot be used against you in court in a criminal case. However, you must understand that your answers to questions can be used against other people in court and anything that they say may be used against you. So you still could face criminal charges on the same subject that you are being asked about.

Also, you need to understand that the immunity you are given will not protect you against civil cases, loss of job, deportation or any other penalties. So don't be fooled into thinking that you are getting something great when they give you "immunity". They are just giving it to you so that you won't be able to take the Fifth Amendment anymore, because the grant of immunity neutralizes your ability to take the Fifth Amendment.

8. Even if you don't want to accept the immunity, and tell that to the judge (which it is probably wise to do, so that you can prove later that you didn't want the immunity), you don't really have a choice. They can give you immunity whether you want it or not. The judge will now explain to you that you must answer the questions asked by the U.S. attorney and, in fact, will order you to answer the questions.

9. You will be taken back before the grand jury and asked the same questions again. You can now answer them or refuse to answer them. If you answer the questions falsely, you may be charged with perjury, which is a serious federal felony. If you still refuse to answer the questions, you will be charged with contempt. This is the most critical moment of the whole proceeding, so you should think about this before you even go into the grand jury and decide on your course of action.

10. Let's assume that you still refuse to answer the questions. You will be taken back before the judge, probably the same judge who saw you before and charged with contempt. This procedure is called the contempt hearing. The first thing to do is to ask to have an attorney (a public defender) appointed for you. You have a right to an attorney at the contempt hearing and the government has to

appoint one for you if you cannot afford one. So insist on your right to an attorney, and ask for a continuance to talk to your attorney if one comes in that you have never seen before.

The court, however, will probably want to proceed then and there. Your public defender is supposed to help you at this hearing. You will be asked if you have in fact refused to answer the questions. If you say "yes", the court may now hold you in civil contempt. You don't have the right to a trial or a jury, or anything like that. So don't expect to have any of the procedural protections that are given to people accused of crimes. In the eyes of the law, civil contempt is not a crime, though it will feel that way to you.

11. After you are held in contempt, the judge will probably order you handcuffed and taken away to jail right away. So you should be prepared when you come to the initial grand jury session to go to jail that day, and have all of your personal business in order. Before you are taken to jail, you (or your attorney) should ask the judge to let you out on bail and to "stay" the jail time. This is for the record, because the judge will probably refuse your motions and have you taken to jail anyway.

If you know about the jails in your area, you can ask the judge to have you taken to one facility that is closer to your friends or family, rather than to another one which is farther away. Explain your reasons for wanting to go to a certain facility to the judge. Again, the judge will probably refuse your requests, however reasonable they are, but you need to make these motions anyway in order to get the fact that you made them into the transcript. This may help you later. If you have a lawyer, she/he will make many of these motions for you. If you are not represented or your public defender doesn't do anything, then you may have to make them yourself.

12. During all of these proceedings (which may only take one day), do not be afraid to discuss your case with your friends and supporters. Tell them what happened in the grand jury room. You have a right to talk about what went on before the grand jury. Do not let yourself get isolated. You may even want to talk to the press, though you should think about what you are going to say before you do this.

13. Now you have been held in contempt and taken to a local jail. Your first question will be, how long can they keep me? The answer is that they can keep you for a maximum of 18 months or until that grand jury completes its term, whichever comes first. Therefore, it is important to find out when the grand jury began its term and when it will finish its term. The grand Jury term is usually 18 months, though this is subject to an extension in some instances.

If you are held in contempt toward the end of the grand jury term, that is better for you, since that means there is less potential time for you to sit in jail. This is one reason to contest everything that the U.S. attorney does, because the court will have to hear your motions., and that decreases the time until the end of the grand jury term.

14. Another way you can get out of jail is by going back before the grand jury and answering their questions. This is called "purging the contempt." You will certainly dislike jail and there will be a temptation to do this. Remember, however, that you went to jail because you believed in a principle, and that principle has not changed.

15. While in jail you can file motions to get out. The law says that the jailing cannot be to punish you but rather to get you to talk to the grand jury. In legal terminology, this means that the intent of the jailing must be coercive rather than punitive. This distinction matters very little when you are actually in jail. However, it is important legally because your lawyer(s) can file motions to get you out of jail early based on the fact that the jailing has now become punishment. Though it may sound strange, the firmer you are in your resolve not to talk, the stronger your case becomes for an early release, because your lawyer(s) can then argue that the jailing is having no coercive effect.

16. If you are a vegetarian or a vegan, request the kind of food that you can eat. Put your request in writing. Many jails now provide vegetarian meals.

17. Be prepared to be harassed by the guards or other prisoners. Someone may try to befriend you, but that person may be working for the FBI. So beware of talking to people that you didn't know from before.

18. Most importantly: while in jail, remember why you took this stand in the first place. You are doing a brave act. You are there because you believe in a cause, and you have not been forgotten. Many people are working to get you out, so stay strong.

[From "Walking through a Grand Jury" by Larry Weiss http://www.animalliberation.net/security/walkgj.html]

1. YOU DON'T HAVE TO TALK TO FBI AGENTS, RCMP, POLICE OR INVESTIGATORS. You do not have to talk to them on the street, it you've been arrested, or even if you're in jail.

2. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO LET THE FBI, RCMP OR POLICE INTO YOUR HOME OR OFFICE UNLESS THEY HAVE A SEARCH OR ARREST WARRANT. Demand to see the warrant. It must specifically describe the place to be searched and things to be seized.

3. IF THEY DO PRESENT A WARRANT, YOU DO NOT HAVE TO TELL THEM ANYTHING OTHER THAN YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS. You have a right to observe what they do. You should take written notes of what they do, their names, badge numbers, and what agency they're from. Have friends who are present act as witnesses.

4. IF THE POLICE, RCMP OR FBI TRY TO QUESTION YOU OR TRY TO ENTER YOUR HOME WITHOUT A WARRANT, JUST SAY NO. The police are very skilled at getting information from people, so attempting to outwit them is very risky. You can never tell how a seemingly harmless bit of information can hurt you or someone else.

5. ANYTHING YOU SAY TO A FBI AGENT OR COP MAY BE USED AGAINST YOU AND OTHER PEOPLE. Once you've been arrested, you can't talk your way out of it. Don't try to engage cops in a dialogue or respond to accusations.

6. YOU DO NOT HAVE TO REVEAL YOUR HIV STATUS TO THE POLICE, JAIL PERSONNEL, RCMP OR FBI. If you've been arrested, you should refuse to take a

blood test until you've been brought before a judge and have a lawyer.

7. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO MAKE THREE TELEPHONE CALLS if you've been arrested on state charges and booked into jail. Within three hours of your arrest, you have a right to free local calls to a lawyer, a bail bondsman, and a friend or relative. Demand this right .

8. LYING TO A FEDERAL INVESTIGATOR (FBI OR OTHER) IS A CRIME.

9. THE FBI MAY THREATEN YOU WITH A GRAND JURY SUBPOENA IF YOU DON'T TALK TO THEM. They may give you a subpoena anyway, so anything you tell them may permit them to ask you more detailed questions later. If you're given a subpoena, you should call a lawyer immediately or contact the National Lawyers Guild. Tell movement groups and your friends about the subpoena. Don' try to deal with it alone.

10. IF YOU ARE NERVOUS ABOUT SIMPLY REFUSING TO TALK, YOU MAY FIND IT EASIER TO TELL THEM TO CONTACT YOUR LAWYER. Once a lawyer is involved, the FBI and police usually back off because they've lost their power to intimidate.

Legal Observers

Guidelines, Strategy and Tactics for Legal Observers

Purpose

The primary role of a legal observer is that of a witness who watches and records the actions of the police at demonstrations. Observers are important because they may deter police brutality, provide information which may be helpful in later court proceedings, and provide follow-up on the special needs of arrestees, such as those unexpectedly arrested or those needing medical attention.

Overall Strategy

Our strategy is to have several levels of observation at the WTO demonstrations.

We are disseminating legal information to as many of those attending the demonstration as possible. We will also have trained legal observers throughout the demonstration areas. We are also planning emergency response teams comprised of observers, attorneys and people with video cameras.

What a Legal Observer is

For several decades, groups such as NLG and the ACLU have utilized individuals to act as witnesses during political demonstrations. These individuals record the details of what they see so that they can later be witnesses.

The role of a legal observer differs in important ways from that of a peace monitor or spokesperson. Legal observers should not become involved in crowd control, conflict resolution, or speaking for demonstrators. Police officers and the media will always be looking for leaders to negotiate with or speak with. Be direct with them that you are here as an observer and that you are only here as an observer.

It is important that the observer not do anything to detract from that credibility. This means:

A Legal observer is a witness not an activist with a cause. During the time they are observers, they do not engage in activity that could be confused with that of a demonstrator.
Legal observers tend to be more likely to risk arrest. They should conduct themselves accordingly. This means no drugs. No drugs in system. Also no weapons. They should have identification at all times.
Legal observers don't give legal advice unless they are licensed to do so.
Legal observers do not engage in violence either oral or physical. They do not damage property.
Legal observers never get physically involved. If a legal observer witnesses an excessive use of force, they may express themselves by saying things like: "Please don't hit him like that,"

What to Bring

A Shirt identifying you as a legal observer, large enough to be worn over your street clothing
A Clipboard. The clipboard should contain complaint forms, as well as scratch paper. We also advise a piece of plastic to go over the clipboard to protect against rain or snow. Bring several pens.
Clothing should be neat and comfortable. Dress with the understanding that you will be moving around.

Use of a Buddy System

Legal observers should always work in teams of two or more. This provides a measure of security, as you always have a witness. It also provides additional corroboration should you observe anything. It is helpful to work with someone you know, so if you are considering becoming a legal observer, you may want to recruit a friend. It is also a good idea for less experienced observers to work with more experienced ones during their initial outings, if this is possible.

Proximity to Police

Legal observers should try to get as close to the incident as possible. In doing this observers should try to maintain a calm demeanor and make no sudden movements that could be construed as threatening.

Taking Notes

Legal observers are there to observe what is taking place, and to witness it. They should take extensive notes. Since legal observers are there to focus on what the police are doing, their notes should capture the details of what the police are doing. Their notes should include time and location of incidents, as well as circumstances that led up to the incident. These notes should be rewritten later when the incident is still fresh in the observer's mind.

The following is a checklist of things to write down:

Names, badge numbers and other identifying characteristics of all law enforcement and government agencies present. If they refuse to supply you with these, or if they are not visible, make note of these.
The manner in which the officers are identified. If there is no identification supplied, make note of this.
Who is in charge. If they refuse to tell you who's in charge, make note of this.

Warnings given, who gave them, time given.
License numbers of private cars moving through the demonstrations.
Name(s) of person(s) arrested. Also ask the person there birth date so you can track them.
Any unusual circumstances, force used, injuries, sweeps.
Witness names, address and phone numbers.
Names of media present.
Names of people with cameras.
Always track time in your notes.
Note other facts that seem important.

After the demonstration, please take the time to transcribe your notes. Give a copy to a legal coordinator. Keep a copy of the notes in a secure location. Remember it may be months before this information is needed by lawyers putting together a legal defense or by you on the witness stand.

* * *

Effective Videotaping Techniques for Legal Observers
Prepared by Paul David Richmond, Law Student

This manual is meant to provide a basic overview of proven tactics for video taping police at demonstrations. This information is presented with the hope that it will be used. Our hope is to have as many people as possible attending demonstrations carrying video cameras and having knowledge of how to use them effectively. It is hoped that you the reader will become one of these people.

Why Videotape Police

Video cameras are, if properly employed, one of the most effective tools for documenting what occurs and containing excesses by the police. The majority of arrests that take place during a typical demonstration are usually for trivial things like "jaywalking or "offensive littering" (i.e. throwing a cigarette butt down in the street.) Letting the police know that there's a record being made and that they are accountable is one of the best ways for law abiding citizens to control and prevent these harassing tactics.

The Basics

Assembling Your Team

Like a person involved in any sort of direct action, the person videotaping should have a support system. Support positions may include the following:

Runner

It is this person's responsibility to take any tape the person with the video camera makes of the police activity and to get that tape out of the area as quickly as possible.

Buddy

Also known as "eyes." This person keeps an eye of what's going on as the person with the video camera photographs the action. This person is watchful for other incidents as well as any police activity nearby the videographer.

Reporter

This person can provide descriptions of what occurred for later broadcast or legal records. This person can also interview witnesses or victims of police misconduct.

It is also a good idea if several people with video cameras work together. One or more can go in close and others can hang back. By recording what is happening to the person going in close, the people on the periphery provide an increased measure of safety. Alternatively, people with cameras may stand on opposite sides of an incident. In this way they both monitor each other and make a more complete record of what is occurring.

A few quick pointers...

It's a good idea to have several videotapes so if you videotape an incident, a runner can get it out of the area and you can continue videotaping. If you're working with an attorney, labeling a tape "attorney work product, privileged and confidential," makes it a little bit harder for the cops to use it without your permission.

i. The Advantages of Looking Professional

Another school of thought is that the more professional you look, the more the cops are going to be cautious of you. Activists and alternative media folk with cameras that look relatively close to what the networks are carrying, and a press pass from what appears to be a respectable news organization has been known to chase off phalanxes of cops.

ii. Media Credentials

The other consideration is if you are a representative of a legitimate media outlet, you are on stronger legal foundation and less vulnerable to the cops. There are laws in some states that prevent the average person from videotaping the audio portion of an event. This law does not apply to the "media." It's something to consider. If you are considering this route consider applying for a press pass. This will gain you the ability to cross many lines you would not be able to as a demonstrator.

What to Videotape during a Demonstration

a. Tips on creating an effective legal aid

In these sorts of situations most attorneys find it useful to show the physical relationships between the actors. The most typical charges at demonstrations revolve around things like people crossing a line on the street or standing on the curb instead of the sidewalk. Many an arrest charge has been dismissed simply because it's been shown a person was not standing where the officer said they were. If you begin videotaping an incident, it's a good idea to leave the camera running until the incident is over. Many prosecutors try to use the gaps in a videotape to attack it.

The most basic technique for good pictures is to try to brace yourself against something so that your camera doesn't shake. Since you're trying to cover a lot of the action, leaving your camera in wide angle is recommended.

b. Proactive Arrest Prevention

What is important to videotape depends a lot upon what occurs. Sometimes cops seem to be trying to fill a minimum quota for numbers of arrests. Then you'll see them arrest people for stupid things like "jaywalking," "offensive littering" (i.e. discarding a cigarette butt,) or simply because someone is standing on the wrong side of a line. In these cases it's a good idea to be proactive.

Whenever you see a cop, or especially several cops moving to some demonstrators your video camera should be on. If it's night and you've got a light on your camera, turn that on too. If cops are aware they are being recorded, this can prevent many arrests.

c. Preventing Abuses During Arrests

It is also important to let the police know you are videotaping them while they are making an arrest. While there are some cops who join the force for altruistic reasons and are relatively decent people, there are some that seem to enjoy hurting people. Tactics observed in past demonstrations included police tossing a demonstrator between them to make it look as if the person was resisting arrest. Police also circle around people so that what they are doing to them can not be seen.

This is precisely why it is important to videotape every arrest and every potential arrest that takes place. The police hate to be seen doing these things and video cameras are simply the best tool for exposing and controlling this behavior. If a cop knows that they are being videotaped when an arrest is going down, the arrest is likely to be a lot gentler. This is especially true if the cop or cops believe that this tape is going to be broadcast somewhere. Most of the local cops have families who live in the area. They don't want their parents, children or spouses to see them behaving in a brutal manner.

Asking the arresting officers questions such as their names, badge numbers, supervising officer, and the charge can let the police know they're being watched and get information at the same time. The more accountable the police officer feels that they are, the better that they're liable to behave during an arrest.

i. When Cops Cluster Around their Victim

One of the most Common techniques cops use when they're arresting someone or using excessive force is to circle around their victim or victims so that they can't be seen. There are several techniques for penetrating the cops when they go into a circle during an arrest. One is to simply get in as close as you can. Since cops have been known to attack cameras with their batons, this is where older or less expensive cameras are recommended. It is a really good idea in this situation to have someone holding the cameraperson's back and ready to yank him or her out.

The other strategy when the cops circle around someone they are arresting is to hold the video camera above your head and point down. This is where the side screens on some of the newer cameras can be most effective. If your camera lacks one of these side screens the best technique has proven to be putting your lens as wide as it can go and simply pointing the lens at the action while holding the camera over your head.

Choice of Video Camera

Choice of video camera is also something to consider. Video cameras run the gamut from relatively inexpensive ones costing three hundred dollars or less, to ones that range into the tens of thousands of dollars.

One of the first criteria to consider if you're going to be getting close to the cops is what you can afford to lose. Unfortunately camera shy cops do occasionally try to break video cameras. Thus, you may wish to simply purchase a camera that won't leave you bankrupt if it's injured or destroyed.

a. Tape format

Video cameras come in a variety of tape formats. Of the relatively inexpensive camcorders on the market, my personal bias is to eight millimeter over the slightly more convenient VHS-C camcorders, because you get more tape for your money and the tapes hold up better over repeated use. Reliable no-nonsense 8mm cameras run about $300-400.

Other formats will improve your picture markedly and are worth considering if you are looking at putting your work on the media. Hi-8 will give you about 50% more resolution than 8mm, but you'll be looking at $500-600 for the most basic model. Digital 8 or Mini DV will double the resolution of an 8mm but the starting point is $700-1000. Of the two digital formats the Mini DV is slightly higher resolution but the digital 8 is far more economical with tape running a quarter of a price per minute.

b. Other Features

There are additional features to consider which will improve your video, though they all add a little to the cost.

Image stabilization is a feature that eliminates shaking and will improve your picture, but will add about a hundred dollars to the price.

Lithium-ion batteries will also give your camera more running time. It's an excellent idea to have more than one battery.

A small microphone will also improve your sound quality. Sound is one of the weakest components of most non-professional videos. Choice of microphone depends a lot upon whether you will be video taping with a reporter. If you have a reporter, a simple stick microphone will work best. If there is no reporter, a zoom microphone will be best to capture the action.

A small light is good for night shooting when much of the worst of police behavior occurs, though budget conscious activists have accomplished the same thing with duct tape and a small flashlight. Some of the newer Sony cameras have an infrared device built into them which can actually record a decent image with no light for about twenty feet, and can be extended beyond that with attachments.

Getting Your Videotape Seen

If you happen to videotape something particularly damning, getting your tape on the air may be a good course to consider. The logic being that if the cops are shown misbehaving they are less likely to repeat the action.

Alternative media groups are in the process of negotiating so that we will have regular air times through local cable TV shows and larger networks like Deep Dish TV.

You may, want to consider, if it's particularly damning, negotiating with one of the local stations about airing your piece. NEVER under any circumstances give these people your original tape. Many of the professionals work daily with the cops and if they're not sympathetic with the cops, they're certainly reluctant to jeopardize their relationship. Give the professional media only copies of your tape, and give them only what you'd want them to show. Events that you videotape can be reedited, corporate media have been known to do that. Also, if they offer to pay you, read any contract, and make sure they're not preventing you from showing the piece anywhere else.

* * *

Action Reconnaissance and Scouting

Like much of the action development process, scouting is a combination of the artistic and mechanical. It can involve something as simple as looking over the place you want to sit down in the road or picket. Or it can be complex, involving great amounts of background research, repeated visits, or unpalatable risks. Mechanically, an activist scouts the physical qualities of the potential action site. Hazards, access, and assembly points are typical scouting objectives. They have enough of a sense of timing and proportion to judge whether the project is feasible-and what it would take. With practice, good scouts see (or research) the subtler physical qualities. Weather and lighting, useful symbols of "the other side", traffic and security patterns would fall into this category. Artistically, experienced scouts (and action coordinators) can look at the site and almost see the action unfolding. They anticipate the reactions of other participants in the action. These include bystanders, workers, the curious, police, and media people.

They have a sense of the timing and flow of the action. The artistic side of the scout can see the symbolic quality of the action and the action site as a political performance space-with an edge. For most of us its a lot easier to become a great mechanic than a great artist. So most of what Ruckus focuses on in this section is the practice of scouting. There is a method to it which we can learn from each other. Developing scouting abilities depends on a lively discussion of technique and results. One note: for the purposes of this section we'll focus on the skills to do a fairly complex scout. Activists can scale down to an appropriate level.

Preparing for the Scout

Before you can prepare for the scout it is prudent to revisit some of your assumptions regarding the action. Is the potential action appropriate to the campaign at this particular time? Is it proportionate to the seriousness of the issue? Will the action speak to the problem? Will it be visible and understandable to its
target audience? It is likely we will have to ask ourselves these questions several times during the scouting process.

Good scouting usually begins with good research. Good background research can reveal difficult-to-see potential. It even helps get us in the right frame of mind. Often, your potential action site is far away and you don't want to make repeated trips. So if you haven't been to the potential action site try to visualize it. What have you heard about it? What do you know about similar sites or facilities? Do any of your colleagues have experience useful to your project? A good bit of scouting is, in effect, brainstorming about "what-if. " Ask yourself what will enhance this creative process. We find scouting is often most effective - and usually more fun - when done by a group. Who should be on the scouting team? Sometimes the team can be enhanced by friends who might not even be activists. Artists or photographers, for instance.

Scouting From A To Z: What Should I Bring?

Addresses. Not just of the place you are scouting but maybe your lawyer as well. I make it a habit of writing address and contact numbers on my forearm in indelible ink before a scout or action.

Aerial Photos. There are many sources of aerial photos. One of the best is the EROS Data Center in Sioux Falls, SD. This is a US Government source. Besides high-level aerial photos they also provide LandSat imagery in a variety of formats.

Aeronautical Charts. Another useful form of mapping. Aeronautical charts, besides being useful for navigation, can also provide additional detail not seen on topographic maps particularly in remote regions. Aeronauticals are updated much more frequently than topographics.

Baby Wipes. Those lanolin soaked towels can be just the thing to get some of that industrial grime off until you can get to a proper wash-up. Saves your water for drinking and it's nice to have clean hands for eating.

Baseball Cap. A baseball cap can be more useful than you first think. In brushy country it can help keep stuff out of your eyes. They are also particularly useful at night when you can use the brim of the cap to screen out unwanted light allowing you to peer into those dark areas with more effectiveness.

Bear Mace. Avoid guard dogs as a rule. Sometimes you just don't know if one is around however. And you could sustain a nasty injury if surprised. Bear mace can help, but be aware someone might think it is a weapon.

Boat Kit. If you're going out on the water make sure your vessel has the basic emergency and repair items. Everyone should have a life preserver.

Binoculars. Often very useful, I consider them part of the basic scouting kit. Binoculars are described by two numbers, 8 x 35, for example. The first number is the magnification and the second is the width of the field of view. For land-use magnifications of 8 to 10 times are good. On the water, where its hard to keep the binoculars stable, a seven power magnification is often used. Top line binoculars, such as Steiners, may have a built-in compass and reticule (an etched scale useful in estimating heights and distances).

Boots or hip-waders. Keep those doggies dry! And sometimes the wettest way in is the path of least attention.

Bug repellent. When you want to sit still, you don't want to be swatting mosquitoes. A bit of bug repellent can make those long stakeouts a little more tolerable.

Camera, with correct lenses. An essential tool for most scouts. A picture can be worth a thousand words. In some cases the camera catches detail that the eye misses. It helps you remember detail. Take lots of photos. If necessary, do a sketch map of the different shots and angles. A 50mm lens together with a zoom is a good basic kit. Make sure you have extra batteries for the camera.

Carpeting. Nothing like a good old 3 x 5 foot square of carpet thrown over the barbwire to make your fence crossing a little less difficult. Fuzzy side towards the barbs for better grip.

Celestron. Celestron is a good, affordable, high-magnification telescope. It provides greater viewing ability than spotting scopes and can be fitted with camera or video camcorder mounts.

City Maps. Especially if you're scouting in an unfamiliar city. It will help you in planning the action.

Coastal Pilot. A coastal pilot is an accompaniment to nautical charts and is an excellent source when scouting marine or harbor actions. A coastal pilot gives harbor regulations, layout, and procedures. It tells what frequencies shipping and harbor pilots use. A coastal pilot also provides weather summaries.

Communications gear. You may want to have gear to communicate with other team members or lookouts. If the action you are planning requires the use of communication gear you need to test it on-site as part of the scout. Interference from electrical equipment, distances that are too great for the equipment, and other users on your channel are more common than you think. Scout electronically as well as physically!

Compass. As an accompaniment to your map. Look for a good liquid-filled model. (The needle settles quicker). A sighting compass is the most useful.

Coveralls. Scouting can be a dirty, even toxic, activity. A good set of coveralls can help keep your better clothes clean. And if you are spotted while scouting ditching your coveralls can give you a new look quickly. In some cases, coveralls can be used as a disguise. Workers might not get the attention idle individuals get.

Digital Cameras. Although they don't yet have the range of lens choice that conventional cameras enjoy, digitals have some useful features. One is no developing time-the images are available for instantaneous use. An the imagery can be sent via modem to coconspirators.

Doggie treats. Sometimes you encounter a dog who is not really a guard dog-just noisy. A big fat doggie treat sometimes will convince them to quiet down.

Doubler. A quick and dirty method of getting more out of your camera lenses. A doubler does just that: it doubles the magnification of your lenses and is a cheaper alternative to buying another long lens.

Duct Tape. No explanation needed. I keep some wrapped on my water bottle.

Dry Bags. Originally invented by river rafters, these bags are made out of neoprene or rubberized ballistics cloth. They roll up at the neck and-when in good repair-are virtually submersible. They come in a number of sizes and styles. Some even have detachable backpack straps.

Electronic measuring tapes. Sometimes it is just too damn obvious when you pull out that honkin' hundred foot tape and begin measuring the senator's office. The solution is an infrared tape measure -- they don't cost that much and are very unobtrusive. Point and push the button.

En-route Maps and Directions. Usually when scouting you want to spend the minimum time needed to get the job done. Waiting for the other car or party to show up increases your chance of detection. Little things, like complete en-route maps and directions, can mean a lot.

Facility Blueprints. Usually part of your background research, sometimes having a good set of blueprints can help you make sense out of a complicated industrial site or sprawling train yard, for example. Most cities require these to be filed with some entity of government -- it varies from place to place. Most municipalities consider these to be public documents.

Film and filters. Think about the photographic conditions for your scout and what you want to get out of the photos. Color film is almost universally preferred. Slides take longer to process but often are less grainy than color print film. Also, using a projector you can enlarge the image more easily than with print film. In extreme low-light conditions infrared film has been used. (It can be used with a normal camera). Polarizing or skylight filters can cut haze and help capture detail, especially in bright light, as well as help to protect the lens.

First Aid kit. If there is a substantial chance someone might get hurt, carry a minimal first aid kit containing bandages and antibacterial cream.

Foam Pad. Closed-cell foam, such as ensolite, can make those long waits a bit more comfortable. You don't need enough to lie on-just a 18" x 30" piece to sit on and lean against.

FM (49 MHz) Headsets. These cheap, two way radios are so limited in range they are almost useless in scouting or action situations. One place where I have used them with success is for quiet communications between scouting team members. In 1989, we infiltrated an action team, video team and photographer to the heart of an AlCan aluminum smelter in Canada – coordinating the movement with FM headsets. Most of these units have hands-free, voice-activated microphones (VOX). In cold weather, condensation from breathing has caused them to fail.

Frequency Counter. This small electronic device digitally reads out strong, nearby radio frequencies in use. Consider their limited use in urban areas due to the enormous "radio clutter." But even in urban areas they can be useful right at the scene of activity-especially if you can see the other side operating their radios. In the forests, where there is very little radio usage, frequency counters have been used as early warning systems by activists entering closed areas. If someone was hunting for them they'd most likely be coordinating by radio.

Frequency Guides. Used in conjunction with a scanner, these commonly available guides do a pretty good job of showing what frequencies the other side is using. Police Call by Radio Shack is a popular choice. Program the frequencies into your scanner and listen for traffic. If it doesn't seem like you're hearing what you should, other methods will have to be employed.

Gloves. Your hands can take an enormous beating while scouting. Good leather gloves can be worth their weight in gold. Basic equipment for scouting industrial sites and a must for crossing barbed or razor wire.

Global Positioning System (GPS) Receivers. GPS has come way down in cost in recent years making it fairly affordable for activists. GPS makes back-country navigation all the easier-especially when operating off-trail. It's also useful when checking timber sale boundaries or when logging endangered species locations. With GPS the more you pay, the greater the accuracy. Costs on this technology is coming down fast.

Hardhat and Clipboard. One of the universal disguises. It's amazing how people will notice, then tune out certain "normal" scenes. Hardhat and clipboard, coveralls or generic uniforms all seem to have this effect.

Headlamp with extra batteries. Hand-held flashlights can be frustrating, even dangerous, to use. A headlamp is a much better choice. On the upper end I look for a focusable beam with a battery pack that you where inside your clothing as some batteries lose 40% of their power in cold weather. Also, try to avoid those that require strange batteries.

Identification. Whether to carry identification on a scout has been endlessly debated. Here's a good rule of thumb: If you get caught and you probably can talk your way out, you don't need ID. If the cops or company security become involved, you probably will need identification. They tend not to release you until they are satisfied they know who you are.

Light Meter. Light meters sometime come in handy for those real early morning actions. When is it light enough?

Measuring tape. How big is the pipe? How wide is the gate? The 25 foot model steel tape works well.

Money. Each person in the scout team should carry a little in case they get separated or picked up.

Nautical Charts. Good for not only what's on or in the water, but also what borders the water.

Night Vision Equipment. Like other consumer electronics these devices have come down in price in recent years. There are two basic types: light amplification and infrared models. The first uses the available light-even starlight. The second type uses an infrared source to "light up" the object or scene and then this reflected light is read by the viewer. Some models can be mounted with cameras or video.

Notepad with pencils or pens. You can also purchase waterproof paper and pens for inclement field work.

Pager. Some activists have had success using pagers as a device to warn or communicate with an on-site scouting team.

Pedometer. A device that tells you how far you have walked.

Pelican Case. Similar to a dry bag, these waterproof plastic boxes are a good solution when dry and impact resistance is needed. Many cases have customizable foam inserts. Also a good choice for protecting sensitive electronic or camera gear in poor conditions.

Plastic Bags. Ziplocks to keep all those little things that need to stay dry, dry.

Proper Clothing. Many a scout has been cut prematurely short by wet or frozen activists. Conditions can change, be ready.

Raingear. The theory goes that rain gear is actually rain prevention gear. If you have it with you it keeps the rain away. The opposite also seems to be true.

Rake or Hoe. Sometimes the easiest way past a fence is to go under rather than over it. With a rake or hoe you can lay on your belly and clear a little slither room. Particularly good if going over the fence would be too visible.

Scanner Radio. A good electronic scout is often a necessary part of an overall scout. Scanners come in handheld and tabletop models. They are easy to use and often provide a world of useful information. The electronics manual will provide more detail on their use.

Spotting Scope. Monocular or binocular, these have higher magnifications than ordinary binoculars. Because of the need to keep the wiggle down at higher magnifications spotting scopes are frequently mounted on small tripods. Hunters and bird watchers often use them.

Survival Gear. If you're out in the back country make sure you have at least minimal survival gear. A broken ankle five miles in can literally become a life-threatening experience. It might be a consideration to have someone with first aid experience on your scouting team.

Toxic Detection and Protection Gear. In this day and age there is no reason why activists need to expose themselves to hazardous materials. Get good advice on what you might find and have the means to detect it and protect yourself. Industrial supply catalogs are good sources for this equipment and information. Many of the larger outfits have help lines for phone inquiries.

Tape Recorder. If quiet isn't a requirement speaking your notes into a tape recorder is a good, fast way to get a lot of data. The small Radio Shack models with voice-operated (VOX) microphones are good.

Transistor Radio. Another way to pass time on those long stakeouts.

Video Camcorder. These can be extremely useful scouting tools and are becoming increasingly popular. One great thing about camcorders is you can record spoken notes right on the tape. They often work in lower light than cameras, although they lack the high magnification long camera lenses afford. Have extra batteries too.

Watch. Another part of the basic scouting tool kit. Time is relative to your adrenaline level: measure, don't estimate. If it has a stopwatch, timer, and alarm all the better.

Weather Information. Get a weather forecast before each scout.

Scouting Intermodal Freight Facilities (Iffs):

Think of containerized shipping as consisting of mode and node. The mode is the method of transport-ship, rail, or truck. The node is where the containers are transferred from one transport mode to another. IFFs can be difficult to scout -- you probably will have to go back several times during the course of planning the action. Your first scout or two will be general scouts-layout, distances, etc. Even though your initial scouts are general always keep an eye out for a good action. You never know when you're going to see something special.

IFF Scouting Tips

It pays to bring a good map of the area. The distances, security, and water all hamper good access. Often one must go to many different vantage points and assemble the overall picture piece by piece. Your map-backed up by sketch maps and photos-will greatly assist the process. Here are the type of questions your general scout should answer: Begin by locating the principal transportation pathways. Notice the traffic patterns. In ports, you will see mostly containers arriving or leaving by ship. They are loaded or unloaded from trucks or railcars. Very little of the containers will be transferred between rail and truck. Where are the rail lines, ship berths, and roads? Are the points of entry for each of these gated and/or guarded? Notice whether private vehicles are permitted in the area. Locate the container storage and staging areas. Where are the container handling vehicles stored?

Container Cranes

Pay attention to the ship unloading cranes as these are often the target of direct action. Are they fixed in position or on railroad tracks? Are they stored in a particular location when not in use? There are two basic types of container cranes: ones with arms fixed horizontally, these often are rail-mounted, or ones whose arms fold to allow over-height ships to pass below, these usually are rail-mounted but can be fixed. When scouting a crane take lots of photos, particularly of the access ladders. If the crane is folded up, is there a deck-mounted ladder that would ease access to the end of the arm?

Rail Facilities

As mentioned above, the containers most often are removed from the ship and transferred to rail cars. These rail cars are also very vulnerable to direct action. Pay attention to the layout of the small freight yard that services the dock area. In general, freight yards have 4 major areas:

The inbound yard, where loaded or unloaded freight cars arrive. This is where trains are "broken up."

The outbound yard, loaded or unloaded waiting to leave. This is where trains are "assembled."

Storage tracks, where unused cars are stored or juggled.

Maintenance and power storage areas. The yard engines stay here while not in use.

Chaining oneself to the ends of the trains, to the tracks, or to switches all can seriously disrupt freight operations. An important note of caution regarding train actions: it is essential you control BOTH ends of any train you are doing an action on, even if the end is out of sight!

Road And Truck Access

In general, controlling road and truck access is more difficult than rail actions in that there is usually many more points of access or routing. Still this important aspect of container facility operation should not be automatically dismissed. How many gates do the trucks normally enter through? Are they guarded? Are the ships loading directly onto the trucks? If so, is there a particular location for this? Are the trucks being loaded from storage by container handling equipment? Any of these operations may be vulnerable to direct action.

Security

Depending on the location, cargo, company policy, or local conditions security can range from good to none. Rarely will a container facility's security be described as airtight, they are simply too wide-open to cover effectively. Nevertheless, an assessment of the security is an essential part of any scout.

First, notice whether there is security at the facility, often there is not. Is it private security or Port police? Often there is a larger lag time in reaction, if it is a private security force. If you see private security people, are they there for gate control, patrolling, or both? Do they use marked or unmarked cars for their patrols? Are they radio-equipped? Look for where the guards hang out while not patrolling. Do they eat on or off-site? If on-site is there a particular building where they eat? Does a lunch wagon come at a certain time each day? Are the guards in uniform? Are they armed? Do they carry mace, clubs, handcuffs, etc.? In general the more heavily equipped the more vigilant guards tend to be. Do they have time-clock boxes that they must insert a key into at various points on their rounds? Do the guards carry radios?

Another important element of security scouting is alarms and video monitors. In general, alarms are used to prevent access to buildings and, less frequently, to cranes. They are rarely used for perimeter or outdoor security since video monitors are more useful. There are two basic types of infra-red alarms: using one or two monitors. The two-monitor type have a transmitter and if you interrupt the beam, the alarm will sound. These units are usually around waist-high, particularly when outside, so animals won't set them off. The second type of monitor is the "motion detector" style, similar to what you see at supermarket front doors. It is usually a single unit covering a fan-shaped area. They are extremely effective for indoor security. My advice is: if you're inside and see one it has probably already seen you. Video surveillance cameras can be fixed or moveable. The moveable ones can automatically sweep over a preset arc (notice the time of sweep) or pan by remote control.

If you can't avoid a video camera, you can often harmlessly disable it with spray starch. Here's how its done: tape the can of spray starch to the end of a pole of sufficient reach. Take a strap hinge and tape one leg alongside the can. The other leg should cross over the spray button, make sure it's all facing the right direction. Tie a string to the end of the crossover leg and run it down the length of the pole. Aim the can and pull the string. Long-distance starch painting, voila!

Electronic Scouting

We discussed the advantages of using a scanner to listen to port operations regarding the ship's arrival-the scanner is also very useful in scouting the shoreside facility. As with the marine operations, the goal is to assemble a list of frequencies that will be useful before or during the action. Examples of these could be the security, fire, police, port police, news bureaus, and/or private contractors servicing the facility. Using the scanner before the action helps one understand the cargo operations and security arrangements. Using a scanner during the action gives you information that will help you anticipate moves by the other side.

There are six principal ways to assemble the list of useful frequencies: frequency guides, FCC database searches, BBS inquiries, spectrum analysis, frequency counters, or your own scanning.

Frequency guides

There are a number of commercially available frequency guides on the market today. Radio Shack's Police Call is probably the most well-known. In addition, a number of specialized guides, such as US Government frequencies, are also available. The use of these handbooks is fairly straightforward: the tables are arranged by location. First look up the location, then look up the particular entities you are interested in.

FCC database searches

Often the scanner guides are not complete or completely up to date. A more sophisticated approach to the search is to use commercially available software to access the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) frequency database. This database contains the records of all FCC licensed transmitters. You can search by location, license-holder, company name, area, etc. In general, it is too costly and difficult to get into FCC database searching for just one action. I would suggest looking for another organization that may already have the software.

BBS Inquiries

As the popularity of scanning has increased, a number of computer bulletin boards (BBS) have arisen dedicated to this activity. One such BBS is Scancom at 904-878-4413. In general, this is a roundabout way to search for frequencies but it could pay off for some difficult problems. A BBS member might have the frequencies you are looking for and putting up an information request is pretty easy. ScanCom also could recommend a BBS more local to your area.

See also Scancom mailing list:
http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ScanCom

Spectrum Analysis

A spectrum analyzer is a device which reads and video-displays the broadcast spectrum. SAs are sophisticated devices-usually costing around $2000 that take a trained operator to use. They are, however, incredibly accurate. You see everything: licensed, unlicensed, listed, unlisted-even "secret" government frequencies. Again, it's best to hook up with someone who is already set up for this kind of searching.

Frequency Counters

These are rather simple devices which, when turned on, read out the frequency of the strongest signal it receives. In general, these units are of little value except in one circumstance: if you were in close proximity to, say, the guard as he keyed his radio. His transmit frequency would show up on your frequency counter. Counters generally cost around $200. Opto-Electronics used to make a serviceable model.

Scanning

One of the easiest, although tedious, methods of getting the other sides frequency is by doing "limit searches" using your own scanner. In a limit scan, the searcher sets a high and low frequency and the scanner cycles between them (at predetermined increments). Commercial, public safety, and military all have specific bands assigned. The scanner guides will help you identify them. A helpful shortcut, if your target is, for example, the guards at a specific port facility is to look closely at the size and shape of the antennas. By matching them up with the pictures in the scanner guide you can figure out which band you need to scan.

Scouting Timber Ship Actions

Overview

There are several basic types of ship actions: directed against military, civilian, commercial, or private vessels; actions upon arrival or departure; and actions against the cargo, crew, or the vessel itself. These distinctions are more than theoretical, each situation requires specific research and preparation. For the purposes of this guide we will focus on an action against inbound timber vessels or those which have arrived and are attempting to off-load cargo.

The Timber Trade And Vessel Identification

Before being able to identify the target vessel one must have a reasonably accurate picture of the timber trade in general. Tropical timber products (TTPs) come in many forms: as raw logs, sawn lumber, veneers, and finished products such as furniture, knick-knacks, or chopsticks.

TTPs are mostly transported by ship due to their weight and because the shipments are generally not time-sensitive. The shipments take two forms: as bulk cargo or in containers. Raw logs and sawn lumber can be bulk-shipped, all else is containerized to protect from damage. From previous research (1990-96) we've found the vast majority of TTPs entering the US is containerized. We apparently found some bulk shipped products coming into East Coast ports. The small amount of bulk imports are probably going to East Coast veneer mills or small manufacturing plants. We've found no bulk imports entering West Coast ports (1991). Given the geographical requirements of the action we can assume that the targeted imports will be containerized.

Containerized Shipping

An ever-increasing proportion of freight shipped today is containerized. Once the container is packed and sealed, it can be carried by rail, truck, or ship-hence the name "intermodal shipping container" (ISCs). There are a number of advantages to ISCs. The containers can be filled at numerous, decentralized locations. They can be transported to collection points by any of the three "modes." Once the containers arrive at the centralization points their uniformity allows ease of handling, loading, and unloading. Most importantly, this ease of handling greatly reduces labor costs. Containers range from 15 to 40 feet and can handle loads up to 30 tons. They are stackable up to nine or ten high, using small interlocks on each of the corners. There are always markings on the outside of the container, listing the owner, operating agent, and physical specifications of the container. Occasionally a small paper invoice will be tucked into the handle area but this is rare, and most often seen on rail carried containers. In general, there are no markings outside that will identify the contents. Some modern container facilities have begun using a laser-scanned color bar code system similar to what is found on grocery packaging. These bar codes are on the side of the container on a patch approximately 12 x 24 inches. Instead of the simple black and white bars of grocery packaging these patches are multicolored. If an activist wanted to apply pressure to the shipping company, one possible way would be to use colored electrical tape to alter these bar codes-disrupting the automated tracking and inventory systems. Even the threat of this might feel substantial since these alterations could be performed anywhere on the containers journey. There is a wide variety of container handling equipment in use, but all work by one of two methods. Either the machine lifts the container from underneath or it locks into the stacking/handling fixtures on the top corners and lifts from above. In general, the lift from below equipment resembles a large forklift (and is generally smaller) while the lift from above equipment can resemble either a marine travellift (a table with each leg having a wheel) or a crane. The crane lifts are of particular interest to action aficionados due to their vulnerability to direct action. Containerized cargo also presents a couple challenges in an action context. A major problem is the "anonymity" of the cargo. Given that a ship will often be loaded with hundreds of virtually identical containers carrying a variety of products, it's virtually impossible to determine which, if any, have the targeted imports. Credible deniability by the shipper could put egg on a campaigner's face. Another concern of lesser importance is the charge that the stuff may be aboard but you're affecting a lot of innocent people by the action. A positive and well thought out response should be ready.

We know that TTPs come into a large number of ports, seldom on fixed schedules, on a wide variety of vessels, and are often handled by different shore side agents and shippers. In order to develop the action, begin with what's known. Factors such as costs, media concerns, legal liabilities, location of people or material resources will narrow the possibilities. P.I.E.R.S (Port Import Export Research Service) is a very valuable tool in the search for timber imports. Working off US Customs Service manifests, PIERS develops an historical picture of the import/export trade. Port of entry or departure, commodity name, agent, shipper, vessel name and quantities are all included in these profiles. When using this service it's important to note that the information has several limitations. The information is never completely current. In general, there is a 4-6 week lag in processing export information while import info lags 1-2 weeks. Another limitation using PIERS is the expense. Subscribers are not charged by the "search" but for the number of "records" each search turns up. In order to limit the breadth of the inquiry the user develops "keywords" as search criteria. Typical keywords are the port name, product name or, if pertinent, the name of the shipper, vessel, or agent. Because of these reasons the optimum way to do a search is to team up someone who has expert knowledge of the timber trade with a PIERS operator who has a good knowledge of what keywords will effectively narrow the request. In one infamous incident a marine mammal researcher (using a different system) asked for all articles in the past six months on dolphins. Unfortunately, the Miami Dolphins had just won the Super Bowl-this request cost hundreds of dollars. Take care developing your keywords.

Using Piers Data: Patterns And Cross-referencing

The first thing to do with your PIERS search is to look for any apparent patterns. Is there one ship that seems to always be carrying TTPs? Is one agent or shipper handling the business? Do the ships always seem to be going to one port facility? Most often one needs to cross-reference the PIERS data with information from other sources. This cross referencing is where the real detective work of developing the action comes in. Sometimes this work can be difficult and the results elusive. It's important that one proceeds methodically in the investigation. Keep detailed notes as a piece of information that now seems insignificant may be the key later. Here are some other sources of information that are often useful:

Journal Of Commerce

The JoC is a national business daily focusing on trade. It contains lots of information generally useful to activists. The portion of the JoC that is particularly useful in terms of ship actions is towards the back of the paper in a section called "ship-cards." The ship-cards list the arrival and departure times of all regularly scheduled shipping, as well as listing the ports of call for the vessel. The ship-cards are particularly useful in cross-referencing PIERS data. Unfortunately, the JoC subscription is over $200/yr, but most major public libraries carry it.

Marine Exchanges

Most major ports have what's called a "Marine Exchange" (ME). These are quasi-governmental non-profit organizations offering a range of services to ships, companies, and individuals involved in the shipping business. Most MEs offer a range of office services as well as historical records and an "intelligence network.". An important service of the ME is to offer daily mail-outs or faxes giving vessel arrival and departure times. This information is generally up-to-date accurate, more so than the ship-cards. Quoting from the Puget Sound Marine Exchange handout: "The services described... provide a constant flow on information through the Marine Exchange from its membership. This information is augmented by periodicals, other marine exchanges, other industry workers, and various sources to allow the Marine Exchange to present a unique, very accurate picture of vessel and port activity...". The following ports offer ME services (1990 survey): Boston, New York/New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Hampton Roads (Chesepeake Bay), New Orleans, Western Gulf of Mexico, Los Angeles\Long Beach, San Francisco Bay Region, Portland Puget Sound (All Washington State waters). Typical membership rates are $45/month for mailouts or $75/month for fax service. If you wish to subscribe, a good cover is to describe yourself as a cargo brokerage consultant.

Seadata

SeaData is another subscription information service offering vessel profiles. A typical profile will physically describe the ship: draft, length, tonnage, speed, etc. The owner, lessor, agents, and operators are often provided. A particular interest: SeaData often can re-create the last couple months of a ship's schedule-offering some predictability. SeaData is very expensive, about $3,500/year. The cost of individual profiles are quite modest, less than $10 each. If one wanted a SeaData profile go through another group who already has a subscription.

Lloyd's Tracker Service

An offshoot of the Lloyd's Insurance, LTS will tell you where a particular ship is anywhere in the world usually on the same day as the request is made. The cost is approximately $200/search.

Developing The Action / Tactical Tools

The various research tools described above are used to identify the port of entry and target vessel of the action. Further research is usually needed before effective scouting can begin. Here is a list of other good sources of information useful in planning ship actions.

NOAA Coast Pilots

NOAA Coast Pilots are books meant to be used in conjunction with nautical charts. They are published by the US Government and are available wherever charts are sold. Here are some of the useful things you can learn from the pilot. (We'll use Coast Pilot #7 (US West Coast) and Los Angeles as an example.) Chapter 1, pg 23. A list of the VHF-FM radio frequency allocations. Chapter 2, pg 32-33. Location and description of ship anchorages in Los Angeles and Long Beach. Chapter 2, pg 76. Pilotage regulations for Los Angeles. Chapter 2, pg 104-107. A general description of the weather on the West Coast. Chapter 4, pg 117-126. Detailed descriptions of the layout and operation of Los Angeles, Long Beach, and San Pedro harbors. Appendix, pg T-1. Detailed weather information for Los Angeles.

Harbor Pilots, Harbor Tugs, And Vessel Traffic Service (VTS)

These three services are most useful immediately before the action. An inbound ship must call for a harbor pilot, often giving up to 8 hours notice of arrival. The pilot goes aboard the ship at a place outside the harbor called the precautionary area. If one is listening with a vhf radio or scanner you will often hear the "pilot call." Some activists have simply called the pilot service by phone and asked when the "pilot for vessel _____ was called for." Details about the pilotage requirements and radio working frequencies are found in the Coast Pilot. Once a ship enters the breakwater tugs are often necessary (or required by statute) to get the vessel into its berth. Like the pilot call radio conversations between the tug and ship will signal immediate arrival. Most large harbors have what's called Vessel Traffic Service (VTS). These services monitor the movements of all shipping from the precautionary area in. In some harbors, reporting to VTS is voluntary, in others it's mandatory. Large ships always report in. Again, by listening to your scanner, VTS will provide refined, short-term info about your target vessel's movement.

Communications

Large ships use three principal methods of communication: HF or MF radio, SATCOM, and VHF-FM radio. HF and MF radios are also called "ham radios" although the commercial frequency allocation is different from the amateur bands. These radios can have ranges of several thousand miles but have several drawbacks that are making them used less by large shipping. SATCOM (Satellite Communication) is what's replacing HF radio. These systems look and operate like a regular telephone utilizing a geostationary satellite for a relay. SatCom costs about $12/minute and intercepting these communications is usually beyond the ability of most activists. Some activists, (having gotten the SatCom number of the target ship from SeaData or from the SatCom directory) have simply phoned up the radio operator and asked their ETA. VHF-FM radio is the principal short-distance means of communication for ships. Range is determined by the height of the antenna above the water but 40-70 miles for large ships is not uncommon. All ships are required to constantly monitor channel 16 (the International hailing and distress frequency) and most, also monitor a second, "working" frequency. In most harbors, the ship will monitor 16, the VTS frequency, and the pilot frequency (usually channel 12 or 13.). Again, consult the Coast Pilot for more details.

[From the Ruckus Training Manuals http://www.ruckus.org/man/scouting_manual.html]
* * *

Basic First Aid and Street Medics

Your First Aid Kit

Everyone should have a well-stocked first aid kit handy at home, in the car and in the workplace.

The contents of your kit will vary depending upon the number of people it is designed to protect as well as special circumstances where it will be used.

For example, a first aid kit in a factory where there may be danger of flying debris getting into the eye should certainly have a sterile eyewash solution in its kit. If a family member is a known diabetic, your kit at home should have a glucose or sugar solution.

When assembling your first aid kit, whether for use in the home, car or at work, you should consider possible injuries you are likely to encounter and then select kit contents to treat those conditions.

It's also important to check your kit periodically to restock items that have been used and to replace items that are out-of-date.

It's also advisable at home and at work to have both a stationary kit, stored in a cabinet or drawer, as well as a compact portable kit that can be taken quickly to the site of an emergency.

Recommended Contents for a First Aid Kit
[Modify to suit your particular needs]

Activated Charcoal (for poisoning emergencies)
Adhesive strip bandages - assorted sizes
Adhesive tape
Alcohol - rubbing 70%
Alcohol wipes
Antacid
Antibiotic ointment
Baking soda
Calamine lotion
Chemical ice packs
Chemical hot packs
Cotton balls
Cotton swabs
Decongestant tablets & spray
Diarrhea medication
Disposable latex or vinyl gloves
Elastic bandages

Face mask for CPR
First aid guide
Flashlight
Gauze pads - various sizes
Hot-water bottle
Household ammonia
Hydrocortisone cream .5%
Hydrogen Peroxide
Hypoallergenic tape
Ice bag
Insect repellent
Insect sting swabs
Matches
Meat tenderizer (for insect bites)
Moleskin
Needles
Non-adhering dressings [Telfa]
Oil of Cloves
Over-the-counter pain medication [aspirin]
Paper & pencil
Paper drinking cups
Roller gauze - self adhering
Safety pins
Salt
Scissors
Soap
Space blanket
Sam splint
Sugar or glucose solution
Syrup of Ipecac
Thermometer - oral & rectal
Tongue blades
Triangular bandages
Tweezers
Waterproof tape

CPR for Adults in Three Simple Steps
(Please try to attend a CPR training course)

1. CALL

Check the victim for unresponsiveness. If there is no response, Call 911 and return to the victim. In most locations the emergency dispatcher can assist you with CPR instructions.

2. BLOW

Tilt the head back and listen for breathing. If not breathing normally cover the mouth with yours and blow until you see the chest rise. Give 2 breaths. Each breath should take 2 seconds.

3. PUMP

If the victim is still not breathing normally, coughing or moving, begin chest compressions. Push down on the chest 11/2 to 2 inches 15 times right between the nipples. Pump at the rate of 100/minute, faster than once per second.

CONTINUE WITH 2 BREATHS AND 15 PUMPS UNTIL HELP ARRIVES

NOTE: This ratio is the same for one-person & two-person CPR. In two-person CPR the person pumping the chest stops while the other gives mouth-to-mouth breathing.

What complications can occur?

Vomiting is the most frequently encountered complication of CPR. If the victim starts to vomit, turn the head to the side and try to sweep out or wipe off the vomit. Continue with CPR.

The spread of infection from the victim to the rescuer is exceedingly rare. Most cardiac arrests occur in people's homes - relatives or friends will be the ones needing to do CPR. Even CPR performed on strangers has an exceedingly rare risk of infection. There is NO documentation of HIV or AIDS ever being transmitted via CPR.

Checking The Pulse

The pulse check is no longer taught or expected of laypersons. Instead, if you see no signs of life (defined as breathing normally, coughing or moving) you should begin to pump on the chest. Please note that the pulse check is still expected of health case providers.

CPR for Children (Ages 1-8)

CPR for children is similar to performing Quick CPR for adults. There are, however, 4 differences.

1) If you are alone with the child give one minute of CPR before calling 911

2) Use the heel of one hand for chest compressions

3) Press the sternum down 1 to 1.5 inches

4) Give 1 full breath followed by 5 chest compressions

CPR for Infants (Age <1)

Shout and Tap

Shout and gently tap the child on the shoulder. If there is no response, position the infant on his or her back

Open The Airway

Open the airway using a head tilt lifting of chin. Do not tilt the head too far back.

Give 2 Breaths

If the baby is NOT breathing give 2 small gentle breaths. Cover the baby's mouth and nose with your mouth. Each breath should be 1.5 to 2 seconds long. You should see the baby's chest rise with each breath.

Give 5 Compressions

Give five gentle chest compressions at the rate of 100 per minute. Position your 3rd and 4th fingers in the center of the chest half an inch below the nipples. Press down only 1/2 to 1 inches.

Repeat

Repeat with 1 breath and 5 compressions. After one minute of repeated cycles call 911. If you feel a pulse return give one breath every 3 seconds and discontinue chest compressions.

Burn Emergencies

One of the most painful injuries that one can ever experience is a burn injury. When a burn occurs to the skin, nerve endings are damaged causing intense feelings of pain. Every year, millions of people in the United States are burned in one way or another. Of those, thousands die as a result of their burns. Many require long-term hospitalization. Burns are a leading cause of unintentional death in the United States, exceeded in numbers only by automobile crashes and falls.

Serious burns are complex injuries. In addition to the burn injury itself, a number of other functions may be affected. Burn injuries can affect muscles, bones, nerves, and blood vessels. The respiratory system can be damaged, with possible airway obstruction, respiratory failure and respiratory arrest. Since burns injure the skin, they impair the body's normal fluid/electrolyte balance, body temperature, body thermal regulation, joint function, manual dexterity, and physical appearance. In addition to the physical damage caused by burns, patients also may suffer emotional and psychological problems that begin at the emergency scene and could last a long time.

Classifying burns

Burns are classified in two ways: Method and degree of burn.

Methods are:

Thermal - including flame, radiation, or excessive heat from fire, steam, and hot liquids and hot objects.
Chemical - including various acids, bases, and caustics.
Electrical - including electrical current and lightning.
Light - burns caused by intense light sources or ultraviolet light, which includes sunlight.
Radiation - such as from nuclear sources. Ultraviolet light is also a source of radiation burns.

Never assume the source of a burn. Gather information and be sure.

Degrees are:

First degree burns are superficial injuries that involve only the epidermis or outer layer of skin. They are the most common and the most minor of all burns. The skin is reddened and extremely painful. The burn will heal on its own without scarring within two to five days. There may be peeling of the skin and some temporary discoloration.

Second degree burns occur when the first layer of skin is burned through and the second layer, the dermal layer, is damaged but the burn does not pass through to underlying tissues. The skin appears moist and there will be deep intense pain, reddening, blisters and a mottled appearance to the skin. Second degree burns are considered minor if they involve less than 15 percent of the body surface in adults and less than 10 percent in children. When treated with reasonable care, second degree burns will heal themselves and produce very little scarring. Healing is usually complete within three weeks.

Third degree burns involve all the layers of the skin. They are referred to as full thickness burns and are the most serious of all burns. These are usually charred black and include areas that are dry and white. While a third-degree burn may be very painful, some patients feel little or no pain because the nerve endings have been destroyed. This type of burn may require skin grafting. As third degree burns heal, dense scars form.

Determining the severity of burns

Source of the burn - a minor burn caused by nuclear radiation is more severe than a burn caused by thermal sources. Chemical burns are dangerous because the chemical may still be on the skin.

Body regions burned - burns to the face are more severe because they could affect airway management or the eyes. Burns to hands and feet are also of special concern because they could impede movement of fingers and toes.

Degree of the burn - the degree of the burn is important because it could cause infection of exposed tissues and permit invasion of the circulatory system.

Extent of burned surface areas - It is important to know the percentage of the amount of the skin surface involved in the burn. The adult body is divided into regions, each of which represents nine percent of the total body surface. These regions are the head and neck, each upper limb, the chest, the abdomen, the upper back, the lower back and buttocks, the front of each lower limb, and the back of each lower limb. This takes up 99 percent of the human body. The remaining one percent is the genital area. With an infant or small child, more emphasis is placed on the head and trunk.

Age of the patient - This is important because small children and senior citizens usually have more severe reactions to burns and different healing processes.

Pre-existing physical or mental conditions - Patients with respiratory illnesses, heart disorders, diabetes or kidney disease are in greater jeopardy than normally healthy people.

Treatment of burns

Cool a burn with water. Do what you must to get cool water on the burn as soon as you can. Go to the nearest water faucet and turn on the cold spigot and get cool water on the burn. Put cool, water-soaked cloths on the burn. If possible, avoid icy cold water and ice cubes. Such measures could cause further damage to burned skin.

Never apply ointment, grease or butter to the burned area. Applying such products, actually confine the heat of the burn to the skin and do not allow the damaged area to cool. In essence, the skin continues to "simmer." After the initial trauma of the burn and after it has had sufficient time to cool, it would then be appropriate to put an ointment on the burn. Ointments help prevent infection.

The one exception to the "Cool a Burn" method is when the burn is caused by lime powder. In that case, carefully brush the lime off the skin completely and then flush the area with water. In the event of any serious burns, call 9-1-1.

First Aid for Cuts, Scrapes, Puncture Wounds At A Glance

Washing a cut or scrape with soap and water and keeping it clean and dry is all that is required to care for most wounds. Putting alcohol, hydrogen peroxide, and iodine into a wound can delay healing and should be avoided. Seek medical care early if you think that you might need stitches. Any delay can increase the rate of wound infection. Any puncture wound through tennis shoes has a high risk of infection and should be seen by your healthcare professional. Any redness, swelling, increased pain, or pus draining from the wound may indicate an infection that requires professional care.

What is the best way to care for a cut or scrape?

The most important first step is to thoroughly clean the wound with soap and water being careful to remove any foreign material, such as dirt or bits of grass, that might be in the wound and which can lead to infection. The area should then be kept clean and dry.

Covering the area with a bandage (such as gauze or a band-aid) helps prevent infection and dirt from getting in the wound. A first aid ointment, such as BACITRACIN, can be applied to help prevent infection. Generally, however, these products are best avoided on the hands and feet beyond the first day because they can delay healing in these areas.

Continued care to the wound is also important. Washing the area gently with soap and water daily without scrubbing is best as the wound heals.

Avoid putting products such as hydrogen peroxide, alcohol, or iodine solutions in the wound. These only delay wound healing and do not do anything to prevent infection.

Who should seek medical care for a cut?

People who have diabetes, other long-term illnesses such as cancer, or are taking drugs that suppress the immune system such as steroids (cortisone medications like prednisone and prednisolone) or chemotherapy, are more likely to develop a wound infection and should be seen by a health care professional.

Any cut that goes beyond the top layer of skin that might need stitches (sutures) should be seen by a health care professional. Generally, the sooner sutures are put in, the lower the risk of infection. Therefore, any cut that might need suturing should be seen as soon as possible.

What are the signs of a wound infection?

If the wound begins to drain greenish fluid (pus) or if the skin around the wound becomes red, warm, swollen, or increasingly painful, a wound infection may be present and medical care should be sought.

Any red streaking of the skin around the wound may indicate an infection in the system that drains fluid from the tissues, called the lymph system. This infection (lymphangitis) can be serious, especially if it is accompanied by a fever. Prompt medical care should be sought if streaking redness from a wound is noticed.

How are puncture wounds different?

There are two risks with puncture wounds. First, a wound infection can occur because of dirt pushed deep into the skin by the object (typically a nail)puncturing the tissue. As you can imagine, these wounds are very difficult to clean out. The second problem that can occur is an infection of the bone. If a nail penetrates deep into the foot, it can hit a bone and introduce bacteria into the bone. This risk is especially great if the nail has gone through a pair of tennis shoes. The foam in tennis shoes can harbor a bacteria (Pseudomonas) that can lead to serious infection in the tissues.

First aid for puncture wounds includes cleaning the area well and keeping the foot elevated for several days (depending on the severity of the puncture wound). Especially if the puncture wound occurred through tennis shoes, an evaluation by a healthcare professional should be sought. Additionally, diabetics, the elderly, those persons taking drugs that can suppress the immune system (such as cortisone-related medications), or any particularly deep puncture wound should be seen by a healthcare professional. This is particularly true if it was difficult to remove the nail, indicating that it may have penetrated the bone. Most puncture wounds do not become infected, but if redness and swelling persist, see your health care professional.

Puncture wounds commonly occur when someone steps on a nail. It is a good idea to wear shoes to minimize the risk of a puncture wound, especially if you have diabetes or loss of sensation in the feet for any reason.

Will I need a tetanus shot?

Most people in the United States have been immunized against tetanus (lockjaw). If you have been immunized, you will need a booster shot if you have not had one in over five years. If you have never had a tetanus shot, or if your series is incomplete (fewer than 3 shots), you might need tetanus immunoglobulin, a medication that can prevent lockjaw.

Treating Bruises

There are a couple of things that you can do to prevent or minimize bruising after an injury. First, try a cold compress. Put ice in a plastic bag, wrap the bag in a towel (applying the ice directly to the skin can cause frostbite), and place it on the injured area. Commercial ice packs are also available, but a bag of frozen peas makes an excellent substitute. It molds to the shape of the injured area and can then be re-frozen and used again (but don't eat them!!). The cold reduces the blood flow to the area and therefore limits bleeding into the skin and reduces the size of the bruise. The cold also decreases the inflammation in the area of the injury and limits swelling in this way as well. If possible, elevate the area above the level of the heart. The lower an extremity is below the heart, the more blood will flow to the area and increase the bleeding and swelling.

Finally, pressure applied to the area (by hand, not with tourniquets) can reduce bleeding .

People who take medicines that reduce clotting ("blood thinners") or have clotting abnormalities should seek the advice of a physician or other health care provider immediately, as should the elderly or those who have experienced significantly severe trauma.

What if the bruise doesn't get better or the area stays swollen?

On occasion, instead of going away, the area of a bruise will become firm and may actually start increasing in size. It may also continue to be painful. There are two major causes for this. First, if a large collection of blood is formed under the skin or in the muscle, instead of trying to clean up the area, the body may wall the blood off causing what is called a hematoma. A hematoma is nothing more than a small pool of blood that is walled off. This may need to be drained by your health care practitioner.

Treating Bone and Joint Injury

You could face bone and joint injuries that include fractures, dislocations, and sprains.

Fractures

There are basically two types of fractures: open and closed. With an open (or compound) fracture, the bone protrudes through the skin and complicates the actual fracture with an open wound. After setting the fracture, treat the wound as any other open wound.

The closed fracture has no open wounds. Follow the guidelines for immobilization, and set and splint the fracture.

The signs and symptoms of a fracture are pain, tenderness, discoloration, swelling deformity, loss of function, and grating (a sound or feeling that occurs when broken bone ends rub together).

The dangers with a fracture are the severing or the compression of a nerve or blood vessel at the site of fracture. For this reason minimum manipulation should be done, and only very cautiously. If you notice the area below the break becoming numb, swollen, cool to the touch, or turning pale, and the victim shows signs of shock, a major vessel may have been severed. You must control this internal bleeding. Rest the victim for shock, and replace lost fluids.

Often you must maintain traction during the splinting and healing process. You can effectively pull smaller bones such as the arm or lower leg by hand. You can create traction by wedging a hand or foot in the V-notch of a tree and pushing against the tree with the other extremity. You can then splint the break.

Very strong muscles hold a broken thighbone (femur) in place making it difficult to maintain traction during healing. You can make an improvised traction splint using natural material (Figure 4-6) as follows:

Get two forked branches or saplings at least 5 centimeters in diameter. Measure one from the patient's armpit to 20 to 30 centimeters past his unbroken leg. Measure the other from the groin to 20 to 30 centimeters past the unbroken leg. Ensure that both extend an equal distance beyond the end of the leg.

Pad the two splints. Notch the ends without forks and lash a 20- to 30-centimeter cross member made from a 5-centimeter diameter branch between them.

Using available material (vines, cloth, rawhide), tie the splint around the upper portion of the body and down the length of the broken leg. Follow the splinting guidelines.

With available material, fashion a wrap that will extend around the ankle, with the two free ends tied to the cross member.

Place a 10- by 2.5-centimeter stick in the middle of the free ends of the ankle wrap between the cross member and the foot. Using the stick, twist the material to make the traction easier.

Continue twisting until the broken leg is as long or slightly longer than the unbroken leg.

Lash the stick to maintain traction.

Note: Over time you may lose traction because the material weakened. Check the traction periodically. If you must change or repair the splint, maintain the traction manually for a short time.

Dislocations

Dislocations are the separations of bone joints causing the bones to go out of proper alignment. These misalignments can be extremely painful and can cause an impairment of nerve or circulatory function below the area affected. You must place these joints back into alignment as quickly as possible.

Signs and symptoms of dislocations are joint pain, tenderness, swelling, discoloration, limited range of motion, and deformity of the joint. You treat dislocations by reduction, immobilization, and rehabilitation.

Reduction or "setting" is placing the bones back into their proper alignment. You can use several methods, but manual traction or the use of weights to pull the bones are the safest and easiest. Once performed, reduction decreases the victim's pain and allows for normal function and circulation. Without an X ray, you can judge proper alignment by the look and feel of the joint and by comparing it to the joint on the opposite side.

Immobilization is nothing more than splinting the dislocation after reduction. You can use any field-expedient material for a splint or you can splint an extremity to the body. The basic guidelines for splinting are:

Splint above and below the fracture site.

Pad splints to reduce discomfort.

Check circulation below the fracture after making each tie on the splint.

To rehabilitate the dislocation, remove the splints after 7 to 14 days. Gradually use the injured joint until fully healed.

Sprains

The accidental over-stretching of a tendon or ligament causes sprains. The signs and symptoms are pain, swelling, tenderness, and discoloration (black and blue).

When treating sprains, think RICE —

R - Rest injured area.
I - Ice for 24 hours, then heat after that.
C - Compression-wrapping and/or splinting to help stabilize. If possible, leave the boot on a sprained ankle unless circulation is compromised.
E - Elevation of the affected area.

* * *

Treatment for Chemical Weapons Injuries
by The Black Cross Health Collective
http://www.blackcrosscollective.org

The first thing to remember about exposure to these chemical weapons is that it is not the worst thing that could happen to you. The hype and fear surrounding them is enormous, but in reality, if you are careful and smart, you should survive it with little problem.

The second thing to remember about exposure to these chemical weapons is that it is only temporary, and we are extremely strong.

The third thing to remember about exposure to these chemical weapons is that there are many myths about treatment and prevention. Much of this misinformation is potentially dangerous. Some of it, if applied, could greatly increase or prolong a person's reaction to exposure, or at the very least provide a false sense of security.

Protection:

Avoid use of oils and lotions because they can trap the chemicals and thereby prolong exposure.

We recommend using a water or alcohol-based sunscreen (rather than oil-based). If your choice is between oil-based or nothing, we advocate using the sunscreen. Pepper sprayed on top of sunburn is not good.

We also recommend minimizing skin exposure by covering up as much as possible. This can also protect you from the sun, as can a hat.

Gas masks provide the best facial protection, if properly fitted and sealed. Alternatively, goggles (with shatter-proof lenses), respirators, even a wet bandana over the nose and mouth will help.

During a Chemical Attack:

STAY CALM. Panicking increases the irritation. Breathe slowly and remember it is only temporary.

If you see it coming or get a warning, put on protective gear, if able, try to move away or get upwind.

Blow your nose, rinse your mouth, cough and spit. Try not to swallow.

If you wear contacts, try to remove the lenses or get someone to remove them for you, with CLEAN, uncontaminated fingers.

DO NOT RUB IT IN.

For pepper spray in the eyes and mouth:

We recommend an eye flush using a solution of half liquid antacid (i.e. Maalox) and half water.

A bottle with a squirt cap is ideal, but a spray bottle works. Always irrigate from the inside corner of the eye towards the outside, with head tilted back and slightly towards the side being rinsed. It needs to get into the eye to help. This means that if the sprayed person says it's okay you should try to open their eye for them. They most likely won't be able/ willing to open it themselves, and opening will cause a temporary increase in pain, but it does help. This works great as a mouth rinse too.

During cold weather, do your best to keep yourself and the victim dry.

For pepper spray on the skin:

We recommend mineral oil followed immediately by alcohol. Some street medics refer to this procedure by the acronym "MOFIBA"

Thoroughly wet a 4x4 pad or similar material with mineral oil. Carefully avoiding the eyes, thoroughly rub the exposed skin with mineral oil. (You can use any vegetable oil in a pinch).

Quickly wet another 4x4 pad with rubbing alcohol, and vigorously rub off the mineral oil. Be extremely careful around the eyes.

Be careful to fully complete this procedure with each victim - any mineral oil left on the skin may act to trap any additional pepper spray on the skin.

Secondary treatments:

Secondary treatments can include: walking around with your arms outstretched, removing contaminated clothing, and taking a cool shower.

In fact, it is essential to shower and wash your clothes as soon as you are able. This shit is toxic, and will continually contaminate you and everyone around you until you get rid of it. Until then, try not to touch your eyes or your face, or other people, furniture, carpets etc. to avoid further contamination.

* * *

What's A Street Medic?

Montreal Street Medics homepage http://montrealmedical.n3.net/

Large protests are usually accompanied by large battalions of police, who in the worst cases, injure protesters who are involved in their democratic right to freedom of speech and assembly. Other factors that contribute to the danger of a protest include the huge number of people involved, and widespread panic resulting from the police tactics of violence, intimidation and repression. Street Medics are there to respond to the needs of the victims of these tragedies. In the face of a lack of adequate emergency services street medics do their best to provide a substitute for services such as emergency transport, first aid and support.

Street Medic and Activist Action Preparation
by The Black Cross Health Collective
http://www.blackcrosscollective.org/beprepared.html

Use Your Head

PLAN AHEAD: For essential needs, care and supplies. Know what to expect. Know how to get assistance. Plan for how to re-contact your buddies if separated.

ATTITUDE: You are powerful. You can easily withstand most of what the police throw at you, and you are fighting for justice. Remember, pain is only temporary and we are extremely strong.

THE #1 WEAPON OF THE POLICE IS FEAR: Once you control that, pepper spray and other police tactics are easily manageable.

COMMON SENSE: Keep your wits, assess what is going down and what needs to be done.

BE CALM and FOCUSED when things get most intense. React to danger or warning signs sooner, not later. Watch for signs of physical and mental problems in yourself and others. Cool down others who exhibit panic behavior.

BEWARE OF RUMORS: They are usually false, and foster fear. Deal with the known truth.

DOCUMENT police actions, brutality, and injuries.

(Note: the above section was written by the A16 Medical team.)

What To Wear

Comfortable, protective shoes that you can run in

Clothing covering all your skin to protect from sun and pepper spray exposure.

Shatter-resistant eye protection (i.e. sunglasses, swim goggles, or gas mask)

Bandana to cover nose and mouth soaked in water or vinegar, it can aid in breathing during chemical exposure

Weather-related gear (i.e. rain gear, sun hat, winter clothing)

Heavy-duty gloves if you plan to handle hot tear gas canisters

Fresh clothes in plastic bag (in case yours get contaminated by chemical weapons)

A cap or a hat to protect you from the sun and from chemical weapons

What To Bring

Lots of water in a plastic bottle with squirt or spray top, to drink and to wash off your skin or eyes, if needed

Energy snacks

Identification and/or emergency contact information ONLY if you want to be cited out of jail in the event of arrest

Just enough money for pay-phone, food, transportation

Watch, paper, pen for accurate documentation of events, police brutality, injuries

Water- or alcohol-based sunscreen

Inhaler, epipen, insulin or other meds if applicable

Several days of prescription medication and doctor's note in case of arrest

Menstrual pads, if needed. Avoid using tampons - if you're arrested you may not have a chance to change it (tampons left in more than six hours increase your risk of developing toxic shock syndrome)

Packing Your First Aid Kit

We've organized this list into 2 rough sections- things we believe most people will want to have in a complete kit in the first section and extras in the second section. We like the extras, and various ones of us carry more or less from the second list depending on the specific action (i.e. is it raining or snowing, is it 100 degrees outside), how much room we have in our pack, and finally what we both have experience using and have access to. Things like epipen and several of the herbs in the second section will only be useful if you can not only get them but also use them responsibly.

Finally give some though to your pack- both the pack itself (most of us use shoulder bags as they afford quicker and easier access on the fly) and how it's packed. What do you want on the outside for easy access? what needs to be kept dry? What things do you often or always use together so should be kept together? We all change our packs and how they're packed around a lot before we find the combination that works for us.

The Basics:

Water- preferably in a sport- top bottle
Non-latex gloves
Gauze - we like individually wrapped 4x4's best but clean 4x4 's or smaller are fine too
Maalox or other liquid antacid mixed 1:1 with water in a spray or sport-top bottle
Band-Aids (S, M, L)
Antiseptic wash (like witch hazel or iodine)
Paper tape
Aspirin- just a few
Ibuprofen- also just a bit
Arnica (homeopathic)
Rescue remedy
Pen and paper
Watch
Emergen-C powder or other re-hydration drink mix
Paper bag
Sun screen (alcohol based)
Mineral (or other) oil and alcohol (only if you fully understand how to use them!)
Candy bar
Bandana
Safety pin or 2

The extras (remember no one carries all of this so pick and choose- they're not listed in the order of importance)

Sam splint
Ace bandage
Cake icing tube (diabetic emergencies)
Benadryl
Calendula / St. John's Wort / Arnica Topical
Sulfur
Apis
Skull cap lavender tincture 1:1
Inhaler
Epi-pen
Tampons (good for nose bleeds too)
Topical antibiotic ointment
Space blanket
Clean t-shirt sealed in a bag
Extra plastic bags
Bandage scissors
EMT shears
Chinese burn salve
Tongue depressors (for splinting fingers)
Flash light
Mole skin
Matches
Goggles
Ice pack
CPR face shield
Cloth sling
Eriogonum cinnamon
Yunnan piau

What Not To Do

Don't put Vaseline, mineral oil, oil-based sunscreen or moisturizers on skin as they can trap chemicals.
Don't wear contact lenses, which can trap irritating chemicals underneath.
Don't wear things which can easily be grabbed (i.e. Dangly earrings or other jewelry, ties, loose hair).
Don't go to the demo alone, if you can help it - go with an affinity group or some friends who know you well.
Don't forget to eat food and DRINK LOTS OF WATER.

Medication in Jail

If you are risking arrest and take medication for any health condition that might pose serious problems were your medication to be interrupted (such as: behavioral disorders, HIV, diabetes, hypertension), you should be aware that you may not have access to proper medication while you are in jail.

A letter from a doctor will help. Three copies of the letter are needed, one for the legal team, one for the medical team (these will be kept completely confidential) and one for you. It should include the following information: your name, diagnosis, that you must have access at all times to your medication, a list of all meds that you require, a statement that you must be allowed to keep meds on your person so that they can be properly administered, and that no substitutions are acceptable. Since your name will be on the document, you may want to hide it on your body as a sort of insurance policy - perhaps you won't need it and then could eat it and participate in jail solidarity tactics, but perhaps you'll be worn out already at the time of arrest and will want to cite out in order to take care of yourself.

Better to cite out than pass out. Your meds will need to be in their original prescription bottle in order for you to keep them, but you also could conceal an emergency supply on your person if you want.

Another option to greater ensure your ability to participate in solidarity is to have the document as described above but with a photo of yourself rather than your name. Your prescription bottle would then need to have your name cut out of the label, while leaving the rest of the label intact.

Please make sure that your affinity group and the legal team is aware of your needs so they can help care and advocate for you.

Physical Self-Defense

The issue of physical self-defense is something that activists rarely, if ever, think of as being an important part of being a successful activist. But physical self-defense is something that every activists (particularly activist wimmin and people of color) should think about seriously. An activist who is successful, an activist who is truly endangering the status quo will most assuredly make enemies of more than just the cops.

Agents provocateurs, hired thugs, and reactionary groups will all have an interest in not just damaging your work but damaging you physically. Every human being has the basic right to live and be free and therefore every human being has the right to defend themselves, to defend their individual right to live and to defend their individual right to freedom. This section is devoted to empowering activists to exercise those rights.

* * *

Thoughts on Self-Defense
by Thomas
http://users.binary.net/thomcat/Selfd.html

Self-defense isn't about doing moves or using techniques -- self-defense is what you think, and more
importantly, HOW you think. Techniques are the easy part -- any teacher could teach you the basics in a very short time. Self-defense techniques are simple, efficient, and straightforward -- not difficult. Forget all the stuff you see in the movies.

The tough part is in your mind. Self-defense is about your body being yours and no one else's, about making your own choices and controlling your own life, and about doing whatever is necessary to stop other people from hurting you. Self-defense is NOT about hitting and kicking people -- though at times that may be necessary.

Self-defense is what you do to keep yourself safe, and in control of your own choices. Every time I have helped in a demonstration of self-defense, there is one person who ALWAYS says, "But I could never do that to anyone!" What they are thinking is, "I couldn't ever put someone's eye out!" The problem is, they aren't thinking beforehand: "Could I do that to stop someone else from hurting me? From hurting someone I care about?"

That's the real question. When we are talking about self-defense, we are NOT talking about picking fights, walking up to someone and beating them up, or whatever -- we are talking about doing what you have to, to stop someone else from hurting you or someone you care about. It wasn't YOUR choice to be forced to defend yourself. The other person made their choice to hurt you -- but your body is YOURS, and NO ONE has the right to control you -- to hurt you. You DO have the right to do whatever is needed to stop them from hurting you.

The point isn't to hurt the other guy, destroy him, or whatever else TV and movies may tell you -- the point is to stop them from hurting you. Efficiently, with a minimum of effort, a maximum of effect, and a minimum of danger to you and the people you care about.

I really can't emphasize enough how much of self-defense is in the mind. Example, for you women out there: Ever been at a party, or at a bar, or at any place whatsoever when some guy comes up to you and puts his arm around your shoulders -- and you didn't like it?

What did you do? Did you stand there, and laugh it off -- but feel uncomfortable? Did you try to slowly edge out from under it, or contrive something so that maybe he would go away? Or did you sit there, and take it, and try to be polite and talk to the guy -- even though you either didn't know him or didn't like him -- and DEFINITELY didn't want his hands on you?

There are a LOT of women who would say the above has happened to them. And that those were EXACTLY the way they reacted. Does it make them feel good? No. Were they allowing other people to presume upon them, to make choices for them? Yes.

Is that normal? Yes. Unfortunately. Is it right that women should have to do that? No.

That is YOUR body, those are HIS hands. His hands do NOT belong on YOUR body unless YOU choose to let them. But it is HARD for some women to allow themselves to think that way -- everyone is trained to be polite, to not make waves, to keep quiet and just deal with it.

It is ALL RIGHT to look the guy in the eye, stand up straight, and say in a clear, FIRM tone: "Get your hands off me." You don't have to be belligerent, angry, homicidal -- you just have to be certain. And 80% of the guys out there will immediately take their hands off you.

You don't have to be scary about it -- just firm. And if you are, chances are that the guy will take his hands off you, and you will STILL be able to sit there and talk to him (if you want) or talk to others -- because it didn't make a scene.

But to do that, you need to understand that your body is yours -- and YOU make your own choices. And that no one else has the right to do that for you, without your permission.

But, unfortunately, some guys aren't going to listen the first time. For those who won't listen at all, I have some simple techniques for you to use. However, many just need to be told again -- in a clearer way.

In 90% of situations, violence is not necessary. (And, in many situations that seem to have incipient violence, 90% can be de-escalated. But I digress.) It just means that you need to explain yourself more clearly -- and I do not mean by putting the person in the hospital.

If you are sitting down, stand up. If you are standing, step to the side (not forwards or backwards -- sideways generally is easier to slip the grasp) turn and face the person, and again, say (louder, but again, don't act angry or belligerent) "I said once, take your hands off me. I will say it one last time: take your hands off me."

Most every guy at this point will do so. Most guys aren't complete idiots, they are just a little thick sometimes.

The point here is simple: certitude and voice tone can make all the difference. Being able to trash someone in a fight is nice, but hey, the best fighter in the world can slip on some spilled beer and get murdered. But if you don't fight, that's not likely, hmm? And notice -- the women doesn't seem "bitchy" or whatever nifty word gets used by drunk guys who get turned down. She just says no. Period.

Notice, in all of these cases, I'm talking casual "attacks". (Which is a hideous term -- how can an attack be "casual"?) However, sometimes people get attacked, raped, beaten, murdered, whatever, by people who deliberately set out to do so. They catch you off-guard, and that's it. Boom. I can't show you how to stop people like that in three easy lessons. Later on, I can give you some simple techniques to use -- and they are effective. But they aren't perfect -- nothing is. To truly defend yourself, you need to train, and most people don't have the time or inclination to do so. (And in the end, even with training, you can't be 100% safe. It doesn't work that way. But you CAN increase your chances a thousandfold.)

The techniques I can tell you, and that you could learn from a weekend seminar, will help you get out of "casual" attacks, and the medium-type attacks, where someone just gets out of hand, or starts a fight, or is stupid and grabs you. Even then, no training is perfect, and without practice, no one gets good. But the most important part is still the mindset.

Just reading these won't do you much good. Practice with someone. Anyone. Even if you only take 15 minutes once and try these things out three times each -- that's something. They are simple, and effective on anyone. But to know what you are doing, you need to TRY THEM. (I don't mean go beat someone up -- I mean practice with a friend. Sheesh. :) (And the more you practice, the more chance you will have when using them.

Simple Techniques for Self-Defense

A few thoughts, first.

1) Disclaimer: Nothing works all the time, folks. None of this stuff is guaranteed. You make your own choices, and do what you decide. I'm not telling you what to do. And if you practice with a friend full-force like an idiot, what happens is YOUR fault. Don't be sorry. Be controlled. Don't be stupid. Think.

2) This stuff works (yes, I know what I said above) but: a) you need to know when to use it, b) you
need to have the confidence to use it, and c) sometimes, it just isn't enough. People, like I said, this little dabble won't teach you to defend yourself in all situations. If you want to know how to do that, take a self-defense class, take a martial art -- but do something. Do NOT think that just because you read this (or anything, for that matter) that you

can handle yourself in any situation, because you "read that self-defense thing, and know a couple moves".

3) These techniques are for escape and evasion. There are other things you can do with them, but the main idea here is to give yourself some room to run, and some time to do it in. Simple as that.

These are NOT for attack. These are nasty -- that's what makes them work. You do NOT walk up to someone and just do any of these. These are for defense.

Finally, one tactical thought: Women, if a guy grabs you, where will you probably try to hit him first?

I bet you said, "I'm going to kick him in the groin. Of course." Would like like to know the one place you should NEVER attempt to first strike a guy? The groin.

Why? Simple. Every guy in the world has been kicked in the groin at least once -- and he KNOWS that
if a female gets mad at him, that is the FIRST place she is going to try to hit. Plus, every self-defense class in the world trains people to kick the groin. And every guy out there knows it. It's a great target -- for the second or third shot. But not the first one -- he's expecting it.

Standard Targets

There are certain points on the human body where no matter how big you are, how strong you are,
or whatever, it STILL hurts to get hit there. This is, of course, where we want to strike. Here is a diagram (a VERY basic diagram) of the human body. The red points are where you want to strike.

Strike Points:

The nice things about these is that you already know where they are, and what they do. You've known since grade school. (You may not admit this, but it's true.) If you poke someone in the eye, in the throat, hit them with a palm on the bridge of the nose, strike to the groin, kick them in the front or side of the knee -- these will all hurt, distract, whatever -- and it works on everyone. None of these points are covered by muscle, fat, whatever -- size and condition does not matter. The only thing that matters is how hard you strike.

Striking eyes and throat:

Put index and third finger together, curl others to palm. Do NOT hyper-extend your fingers, merely hold them rigid. Strike (think like a spear) straightforward into the eye or right above the hollow of the throat. Don't strike directly into the hollow -- strike about 1/2 to 3/4 of an inch above it. (Note: you can also strike these points using only the thumb).

Bridge of the nose:

Hold out your hand, and spread your fingers wide. This tightens the hand, and pushes forward the palm side of the large knuckles. Feel how hard they are? Push your hand forward and strike with that area right below where the nose joins the brow ridge -- basically the center of the nose.

Groin areas:

Many ways you can strike here: Knees, feet, or hands.

KNEES: If using a knee, simply bring it upward as hard as you can -- but think of the end of your knee as a point -- and drive that point into the groin. If your hands are free, before striking, grab the attacker's hips, and pull the attacker into the strike as your drive the knee.

FEET: Simple. Bring your instep up into your attackers groin. However, if you are too close for that, but too far to use a knee, kicking straight up and striking with the shinbone of your leg works just fine also.

HANDS: Swing your arm in a straight-arm upward strike into the groin, either using an open-hand palm strike, or a closed fist -- the closed fist strikes just the same as the open palm strike, except the fingers are curled -- still a straight-arm strike.

Striking the knees:

Striking the knee is something self-defense classes always teach, because it is a serious weak point on the human body. However, it can be harder than it sounds. If striking the front of the knee (the kneecap) drive your HEEL forward into the kneecap, and drive it far forwards -- just tapping it won't give you enough time to get away. If striking the side of the knee, there are a couple of different ways to do it, but the easiest (note: this is according to me) is to sweep the INSIDE of your foot in a circular motion, striking the side of the knee -- and strike hard, again. (That was for if you were standing in front of the attacker.) If you are standing beside the attacker, pick up your foot, and drive your heel sideways and downward (at about a 45 degree angle) into the side of his knee. Hard.

Note: all of the knee attacks can be difficult without practice -- AND, you will be off balance more than if you were using a hand technique. So, they work -- but practice them. Don't try something and fall over. That's not a good thing.

Now, remember, the idea here is not to destroy your attacker, beat him up and drag him by his collar to the nearest police station. Your mission here is to ESCAPE UNHARMED. That is your goal. So, if you hit him once, and he's clutching his eyes and can't see, then run. No sense staying around and giving him time to recover, hmm?

You might have to hit him a couple of times, and do some serious damage -- but as soon as you have a chance, GET AWAY. That's your goal. Get away unharmed. Remember -- all you are doing is stopping this person from harming you. Do what is necessary, then escape.

Martial Arts for Self-defense

I think the martial arts are great: I enjoy the ones I do, I like the ones I see, and I think that just about every single martial art out there has at least SOME very good things about it -- if not a LOT of good things about it. However, in this section, we are talking about martial arts for self-defense purposes, which is a very specialized thing -- and not all martial arts have strengths in this area.

Now, in general, all martial arts will help you prepare to defend yourself, at least indirectly -- you will be in better shape, more flexible, more able to withstand punishment, and have more control over your body. These are all good things.

However, being a football player will do much the same things. To me, for a martial art to be a good self-defense art, it needs to do several things:

It must directly teach you simple, efficient ways of dealing with common attacks.

It needs to prepare you for eventualities -- meaning in class, you need to deal with the fact that in self-defense, no matter what you do, there is a chance (sometimes, a GOOD chance) that you are going to get hurt.

It needs to teach you when to react, when NOT to react, and when to attempt to de-escalate. (Some people might jump on me here -- but seriously folks, sometimes it is a complete waste of time to attempt to de-escalate.)

MOST IMPORTANTLY, it needs to teach you the correct mindset to stand up for yourself, be in control of yourself, and to have the self-confidence to know you are worth defending, which allows you to do so.

Also, (personal bias) since most people who wish to learn self-defense will not stay in the martial art for years and years, my opinion is that the art should immediately start teaching basic self-defense, in the first few weeks of class. (If you are going to advertise yourself at a self-defense course, then students should start learning that -- as opposed to waiting to add the self-defense curriculum until the student is "firmly grounded in the basics" about 2 years down the line.

I love Aikido, and think that Tai Chi is wonderful. However, are they good self-defense arts, in my opinion, according to the criteria above? Not really.

If you have taken Aikido or Tai Chi for 10 years, and practiced diligently, conscientiously, and continually, and thought about what you are doing with regards to self-defense, there is a fairly good chance that you will be just about untouchable. On the other hand, after one year? No. The way those arts are taught, the general mindset of the art and the things those arts emphasize do not teach self-defense -- at least, not right away.

And most people can't wait 10 years to learn to defend themselves. I highly recommend both Aikido and Tai Chi -- there are some VERY important things you can learn from them. However, immediate self-defense is not one of them.

Things to check

When attempting to find a martial art that teaches self-defense, there are a couple of simple things to look for. Each martial art is different, and moreover, each instructor teaches their martial art differently -- so WTF Taekwondo at one place might be completely different than WTF TKD at another. You just have to go take a look.

Attend a class -- take a look. What do you see happening?

Are people practicing practical self-defense?

Are people practicing reactions to common self-defense situations? Or are they doing rote forms, practicing flying spin kicks, or using archaic weapons that you could never carry on the street? (Remember, your point here is self-defense -- you are not looking for instructions on how to use a halberd. If the art teaches that as well, fine, but that is not the primary goal of your search.)

Are the lower belts practicing simple, efficient ways to deal with attackers?

Or is it just the higher belts who are working on self-defense? Yes, all beginners need to work on basics -- however, you should ALSO see them working self-defense techniques. After all, if you join, that is where you are going to be -- and you are here to learn to defend yourself.

Is the instructor teaching a mindset in addition to the moves?

Can you see the instructor making sure the students are understanding that they aren't learning to beat up on people, they are learning to stop people from hurting them -- and that it is OK to do whatever is necessary to accomplish that? (I'm not talking only about being able to seriously damage someone here -- I'm also talking about the other end of the spectrum, so that people who are being harassed, manhandled, etc. -- but not directly VIOLENTLY attacked, know how to deal with the situation -- and are building the self-confidence to do so.)

Optional, but a good idea: Does the martial art (and the instructor) teach self-defense reactions in a way that makes sense to you?

Meaning, the way that particular martial art reacts to an attack -- does that fit the way your mind works? Do the reactions make intuitive sense to you, in the style in which they work? Does it fit the physical limitations of your body? Example: 1) a very tiny person might become VERY good at judo -- but won't be able to do much in the way of self-defense in only a year. Size can make a difference.

"Size and strength don't matter."

NO. Sorry. It is true in a way, but not really. Let's explain that a little more clearly.

Size and strength don't matter -- true, yes, provided:

Provided you take your martial art, practice it diligently and accurately, for an extended time. Provided you understand the difference between street situations and class situations, self-defense and point sparring, and provided you learn the self-defense mindset.

If that is true, than yes -- when you are a 4th or 5th degree black belt, it won't matter how big your opponent is, really. (Unless they ALSO are a 5th degree. Then it might matter, but not necessarily.)

And yes, for certain techniques it doesn't matter how big or strong the other person is. Poke them in the eye, jab them in the throat, lock back the knee, etc. -- size won't matter. So people aren't lying when they tell you size doesn't matter. Not necessarily.

But don't believe it never matters.

When you are just starting out, it matters. When you've only been doing it awhile, it matters. When you are sparring people in your martial arts class, it matters.

I wish it wasn't true, (since I'm 5'8" and 140 pounds) but a big guy (or girl) has a definite advantage in most fights. That's simply how it is. If you take two people who have been taking the same martial art for about 6 months, and put them in a fight, MOST LIKELY, the bigger guy is going to win. You put a 6'4", 220 pound street thug up against a 5'2", 110 pound female yellow belt in a streetfight, the guy has the advantage. Obviously.

Though that doesn't mean he is going to win.

A good big guy, in general, will beat a good small guy up to a certain point of experience and knowledge. Beneath five years (and actually way beyond that, but I don't want to dishearten you too much) size makes a difference.

Size does matter -- and so you have to adjust your techniques to your situation. If I'm fighting against a guy twice my strength and size, I'm NOT going to try punching him in the chest. (Which I really wouldn't do anyway, it's fairly useless, though it looks cool in movies.) I'm also definitely NOT going to stand there and attempt to trade punches with him. I'm not going to use strength moves, I'll use soft tissue techniques (no matter how strong you are, your muscles will NOT cover the trachea) and I will NOT close with him until I have him stunned or off balance, because if he grabs me, I'm in trouble. (Not dead, not yet, but if he's that much stronger, even if he's an idiot, he can do serious damage.)

A small person can defend themselves against a big person. But it's an uphill battle, make no mistake. The trick to winning is fairly simple: Be smarter, and be nasty.

A big person (mostly, but not all) has relied on their size to get by -- most people don't need much more than that to win, especially the type of person who would attack you on the street. And since you can't beat them at size, you have to beat them at BRAINS. Because if you don't, you'll get killed.

In martial arts, it ISN'T about size or strength -- it's about using your brain to make your body do what you tell it to, effectively. In self-defense, the application of martial arts is simple: Do what is necessary to keep yourself from being hurt. What that means against bigger people is simple -- you are probably going to have to upgrade the seriousness of your techniques, and go for soft tissue (fairly damaging) targets instead of simple disables. Because your margin for error just went down -- a big guy hits harder than a small guy.

So the ending conclusion? In time, size won't really matter. But no matter what, you must still keep it in mind, because even if it doesn't matter, it still makes a difference. (And in the beginning, it matters, too.)

* * *

Do You Need a Weapon?

Most martial arts experts agree an armed fighter almost always has the advantage over the unarmed fighter -- even if the unarmed person is proficient in empty hand self-defense.

One obvious lesson is to avoid any conflict against armed opponents. The other is that maybe you should consider carrying a weapon. Is this an option for you?

What if you are absolutely against using weapons of any kind? There are a number of choices you can make in the "non-lethal" category. Some of these items receive heavy promotion and they seem like they should work. Unfortunately, many of them don’t work at all and can’t really be considered weapons.

On the other end of the force spectrum, some self-defense weapons -- like high-power rifles or combat knives – might not be the best choice for you either. Surprisingly, your choices will mostly come down to three types of weapons; impact weapons, edged weapons or projectile weapons.

Rule of Thumb

Still you ask yourself, do I need a weapon?

The rule of thumb is that you should use a weapon to defend against another weapon. In other words, you employ deadly force to protect yourself from deadly force. Defending yourself from someone with a weapon with only empty hand techniques could be the most challenging task advanced fighters will ever undertake. For the average citizen, it is almost entirely catastrophic.

For me, I think of weapons like my spare tire in my car. Of course I hope I never have to use it, but I want it with me when I drive.

Considerations

There are a number of considerations when choosing a weapon:

Practicality. How useful is it? Can you carry it with you? It would be difficult these days to carry a six-foot staff to work, on the bus or in your car. On the other hand, firearms are portable and more powerful than other weapons.

Expertise. How well can you use it?

Effectiveness. Tear gas may be effective for some situations while firearms may be effective for others.

Concealment and carry. Your weapon won't do you any good if it's not with you. (A reason why empty hand expertise is so important, you are never without your natural weapons. Also a good reason for working with improvised weapons.)

Intimidating effects. Certain weapons, a shotgun for example, may produce enough shock value to make your opponent think twice about attacking. Although, it would be hard to imagine anyone who would not be intimidated by any sort of firearm.

Generally, weapons fall into a few broad categories.

Impact weapons are those used primarily for striking. This category includes night stick, ashtrays and beer mugs. You can also put flexible weapons like nunchaku and chains here. They are really a type of impact weapon, but their real advantage lies in the tremendous power generated by centrifugal force.

Edged weapons are obviously those designed to cut, slash or stab. Knives, swords, machetes and broken glass are included here.

Projectile weapons are anything that is propelled across a space allowing to reach an opponent without actually having to be in touching range. This includes firearms, crossbows, air tasers, and pepper spray.

Below are some weapons with which you should be familiar and some which you should forget:

Pepper Spray/Teargas/Mace

This is a great weapon that easy to use and that you can carry with you at all times.

Baton/Night stick

This is a good impact weapon if you have the training, but how many of you will go out and become proficient with a night stick. Warning: if you use your baton just like a hammer or a club you'll probably have it taken away from you. What you will want to consider is one of the heavy, 'C'-cell police flashlight from Maglight.

Handgun

Probably the single most equalizing weapon anyone can possess. There is a plethora of information surrounding firearms. There are continuing and raging debates about effectiveness of different calibers, makes of weapons and so forth. Don't be intimidated. Educate yourself. A female firearms instructor named Paxton Quigley has a great book out called Armed and Female which is simply outstanding. Another great book on the subject is Massad Ayoob's In the Gravest Extreme. Both cover all you'll need to know about this weapon. Get good advice and test fire a number of handguns until you find one you like. A super important point here -- Don't let anyone talk you into a more powerful handgun than you are comfortable with. If you feel anxious with your weapon you won't practice. And if you don't practice, you won't be competent. And if you're not competent...

Shotgun

The 12 gauge shotgun has been called by Massad Ayoob the most destructive device a civilian can own short of a hand grenade. If you are smaller, a 12 gauge might be too much to handle and even a 20 gauge still kicks a lot. There are a number of 410 gauge models that you might feel comfortable with. You should consider this weapon for home defense, but you won't be able to carry it with you anywhere else.

Rifle

Typically a modern rifle is overpowered for most urban self-defense scenarios. A rapid firing .22 rifle can be a good weapon. If you live in a rural environment, rifles are probably the ultimate "reach out and touch someone" device.

Knife

Knife fighting is a particularly savage form of combat. A knife is such a lethal weapon that just flailing away with a kitchen knife can produce dramatic results. I have met some very proficient and very deadly knife fighters. However, for the rest of us mere mortals, I would not recommend taking up knife fighting -- your handgun is about the same size as a fighting knife and you don't even have to get close to your attacker to use it. Plus there is an old saying that you "don’t want to take a knife to a gunfight."

Key Chain/Key Spike

This looks good and even sounds like a good weapon. These are the long chains which you put your keys on or those key rings with the spikes which come out between your knuckles. Unfortunately, the chain is hard to control unless you have previous experience with flexible weapons. The spikes which come from between your fingers are only effective if you have a good punch. My recommendation would be to pass on both unless you are working on serious martial arts skills.

Stun gun

This, too, looks like it would be very threatening and would require very little strength to use. In reality, however, you have to hold it against someone in an unprotected area. The small consumer stun guns don't do much more than sting real bad. Don't believe the ads that say it will instantly drop an attacker to his knees.

Improvised weapons

Environmental weapons can be found everywhere. You just have to open your mind to recognizing them.
Basically, if you can smash somebody with it, cut somebody with it or launch it at someone, you’ve found

yourself a weapon.

Improvised weapons can include:

Pen/pencil
Beer bottle/mug
Ashtray
Hammer
Chair
Scissors
Screwdriver/ice pick
Pipe/club
Shovel

You might even consider throwing rocks if you can. Don't laugh. One bouncer claims someone hurling ashtrays like frisbees in one club in which he worked wreaked incredible damage to innocent bystanders and property as well.

Weapons are Part of Your Self-Defense System

When you are required to physically defend yourself or your loved ones, you have to have a full spectrum of options. This will most likely progress from empty-handed techniques to an impact weapons, to an edged weapon and then, finally, to a firearm. I don't know of any martial artist who advocates NEVER using a weapon.

[From "Women's Self-Defense Institute" http://www.defendu.com/wsdi/do_you_need_a_weapon.htm]

Anarchist Projects

Social Centers, Community Spaces, and Squats

From "Italy's Cultural Underground"
by Adam Bregman
http://www.altpr.org/apr14/social_centers.html

Though it may be hard to imagine in America, in Italy, communists, anarchists, ravers, punks, hackers and artists have seized vast, abandoned factories, forts, boarded-up schools and churches and transformed them into cinemas, concert halls, bars, squats and art galleries. Far from being scabies-infested scum pits with gutter punks spray-painting the names of their favorite bands on the walls, Italy's social centers are among the country's most vital cultural institutions.

Some are draped with spectacular works of art, while others provide shelter and services for new immigrants. For many young people, especially in small and medium-sized towns, social centers provide an ideal hangout, which is the only alternative to expensive, sleazy discos.

The movement began in 1975 when some radical communists snuck into a dilapidated building in a poor neighborhood of Milan, cleaned the place up and issued a manifesto stating what they hoped to accomplish. The neighborhood lacked a preschool, kindergarten, library, vocational school, medical clinic and spaces for organizing meetings and concerts. They invited city officials and the local population to their social center, called Leoncavallo, where they eventually opened a carpentry workshop, a sewing school, a theater and other facilities. Leoncavallo, Italy's first and most famous social center, has been shut down and forced to move locations several times. Today it is a giant structure covered with magnificent graffiti, containing a concert room, a disco, a skateboard ramp, a documentation center to help immigrants and several bars. The folks who run it are into hip-hop (which is still yet to hit it big in Italy) and Public Enemy chose to play there recently rather than a traditional concert venue.

During the ’80s, the social center movement was spurred by punk rock and in the ’90s the rave scene was a prominent influence. Currently, Italy has approximately 150 social centers, but there is a basic philosophy that governs almost all of them.

“Social centers are supposed to be open to any form of expression,” says Andrea Borgioli, a university student with dyed black hair and shaved eyebrows who digs Marilyn Manson and Korn and can’t find anyone who will rent him an apartment in Bologna because of how he looks. “Like if I wanted to do an exhibition somewhere else, I would need lots of money, but I could go to a social center and they would let me do it for free and anyone can go there and do whatever kind of art they want.”

Unlike anything else in Italy, social centers are also supposed to be open all the time to provide a refuge for anyone who needs a place to sleep or just somewhere to go, though often they are closed for security reasons or because no one is around. Distinct from practically any other place one would go to have
fun, social centers are nonprofit, anti-capitalist entities. The social center movement was mostly given form by communists. (Communists in Italy range from your typical jargon-spouting Marxist-Leninists to what most of the world would more accurately call socialists, and from a

major political party that still uses the hammer and sickle as its symbol -- but more closely resembles the United States' Democratic Party -- to young, radical communists who occupy buildings and create social centers.) Their anti-capitalist tradition means that most social centers use any profits from events to pay their minimal expenses or to help their comrades who have been arrested. At most social centers, entry to a concert or rave is $3, beer or drinks, maybe $1 and food, probably free.

Social centers are free autonomous zones where the government and police have no jurisdiction and where folks should feel free to indulge in whatever they like, a stark contrast to the hundreds of ridiculous laws that apply to any sort of entertainment-related business in America.

"Inside you can use drugs, but not sell them," says Borgioli, "which is not because of problems with the police or for the safety of the social center, but for social, idealistic reasons, because they don't want someone to get rich selling drugs to everyone and exploiting people. At the same time, they want people to be free to do what they want." This freedom means that at many of the smaller social centers, almost any band can set up its own gigs. Also, travelers can usually find a free place to crash.

...

Lorenzo Costa spent most of his college years deeply involved with the social center movement in Bologna. Somewhat of an expert on the subject, Costa explained to me how difficult it is for many social centers to survive.

"When we wanted to open a social center, we would look for places that are closed down and often places that were owned by the city. For the first month we'd sleep inside, because you don't know if the police are going to throw you out. Sometimes, you'd get thrown out the next day. One time we occupied this very beautiful place that had been a monastery and a school and had been closed for 12 years. We had a guy who went around to radio stations reading a document explaining why we had occupied the place and inviting people to come down. A few hours later, we had 200 people. This was a real nice period where there was a real movement, but it eventually fell apart because of problems with the police and divisions in the city between various groups."

...

However, Italy's social centers, which the French newspaper Le Monde called "the Italian cultural jewel," continue to expand. Though many European countries have squatters' movements and some left-leaning governments are tolerant of them, only Germany's squats, which are not nearly as abundant or diverse, in any way compare to the scene in Italy. Of course, in the U.S. there is no such movement to speak of. There have been squatters' movements on the East Coast in New York and Philadelphia, but they have been invariably smashed to pieces by the police. Is America tolerant enough to ever let young people have control of public space to do with what they wish? Probably not. But before that ever happens, there will have to be a consensus among young people that they want to have control over their own lives and their own hangouts. And there will have to be an organized movement to achieve those goals.

Until then, go to Italy and check out some real democracy.

* * *

Community Gardens

What is a community garden?

Community gardens transform empty lots into green, living spaces. They are collaborative projects created by members of the community; residents share in both the maintenance and rewards of the garden. There are an estimated 10,000 community gardens within U.S. Cities.

Why create a garden?

The simple act of planting a garden can create positive environmental, economic, and social impacts on a neighborhood. Community gardens foster cultural understanding and an awareness of the environment around us.

Finding a site for the garden can be a long search, but once the garden is in place, there is always a waiting list of people who want to join. Gardeners share common space, fertilizer, tools, a tool shed, and sometimes the cost of buying plants. Grants usually help to cover other expenses such as the cost of metered water and public liability insurance. Gardeners meet several times over the growing season, once for a formal start-up, then a few times over the summer for informal pot luck dinners and an annual open house.

[From Urban Community Gardens http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~sewells/communitygardens.htm]

This fact sheet is designed to give many different groups the basic information they need to get their gardening project off the ground. These lists are in no way meant to be complete. Each main idea will probably trigger more questions, so an assortment of ways to carry out that idea are presented; pick and choose those that seem to apply to your own situation.

Form a Planning Committee

What kind of garden--vegetable, flower, trees, a combination?

Who will the garden serve--youth, seniors, special populations, people who just want an alternative to trash, everyone?

If the project is meant to benefit a particular group or neighborhood, it is essential that the group be involved in all phases.

Organize a meeting of interested people.

Form committees to accomplish tasks: Funding; Youth Activities; Construction; Communication.

Consider Approaching a sponsor. A sponsor is an individual or organization that supports a community garden. Site sponsorship can be a tremendous asset. Contributions of land, tools, seeds, fencing, soil improvements or money are all vital to a successful community garden. Some community gardens can provide most of their provisions through fees charged to the membership; but for many, a garden sponsor is essential.

Churches, schools, citizens groups, local businesses, local parks and recreation departments are all potential supporters.

Community Development Block Grants are sometimes available through your municipality.

Make a list of what needs to be done.
Find a garden site.
Obtain lease or agreement from owner.
Decide on a mailing address and central telephone number(s).
Try to have at least 3 people who are very familiar with all pertinent information. Form a telephone tree.
If your community garden has a budget, keep administration in the hands of several people.
Choose a name for the garden.

Choose a Site

Identify the owner of the land.
Make sure the site gets at least 6 full hours of sunlight daily (for vegetables).
Do a soil test in the fall for nutrients & heavy metals.
Consider availability of water.
Try and get a lease or agreement which allows the space to be used at least for 3 years.
Consider past uses of the land. Is there any contamination?
Is insurance something you need to consider?

Prepare and Develop the Site

Clean the site.
Develop your design.
Gather your resources--try to gather free materials.
Organize volunteer work crews.
Plan your work day.
Decide on plot sizes, mark plots clearly with gardeners names
Include plans for a storage area for tools and other equipment, as well as a compost area.

Have a rain-proof bulletin board for announcing garden events and messages.
Arrange for land preparation--plowing, etc. -- or let gardeners do their own prep.
Will the garden be organic?
Lay out garden to place flower or shrub beds around the visible perimeter. This helps to promote good will with non-gardening neighbors, passersby, and municipal authorities.

Organize the Garden

Are there conditions for membership (residence, dues, agreement with rules)?
If plots are assigned, how will they be assigned (by family size, by residency, by need, by group-- i.e., youth, elderly, etc.)? Or will all land be worked in common?
If plots are assigned, how large should plots be (or should there be several sizes based on family size or other factors?
If plots are assigned, how should plots be laid out?
If the group charges dues, how will the money be used? What services, if any, will be provided to gardeners in return?
Will the group do certain things cooperatively (such as turning in soil in the spring, planting cover crops, or composting)? Or will they do everything cooperatively?
If plots are assigned, when someone leaves a plot, how will the next tenant be chosen?
How will the group deal with possible vandalism?
Will there be a children's plot?
Will the gardeners meet regularly? If so, how often and for what purposes?
Will gardeners share tools, hoses, and other such items?

How will minimum maintenance (especially weeding) be handled both inside plots and in common areas (such as along fences, in flower beds, and in sitting areas)?
Will there be a set of written rules which gardeners are expected to uphold? If so, how will they be enforced?
Should your group incorporate and consider eventually owning your garden site?

Insurance

It is becoming increasingly difficult to obtain leases from landowners without public liability insurance. Garden insurance is a new thing for many insurance carriers and their underwriters are reluctant to cover community gardens. It helps if you know what you want before you start talking to agents. Two tips: you should probably be working with an agent from a firm which deals with many different carriers (so you can get the best policy for your needs) and you will probably have better success with one of the ten largest insurance carriers, rather than smaller ones.

Troubleshooting

Vandalism is a common fear among community gardeners. However, the fear tends to be much greater than the actual incidence. Try these proven methods to deter vandalism:

Invite everyone in the neighborhood to participate from the very beginning. Persons excluded from the garden are potential vandals.
Make a sign for the garden. Let people know to whom the garden belongs and that it is a neighborhood project.

Plant a "vandal's garden" at the entrance. Mark it with a sign: "If you need to take food, please take it from here."
Involve the neighborhood children in learning gardens. They can be the garden's best protectors. (see below.)
Create a shady meeting or meditation area in the garden and spend time there.
Make friends with neighbors whose window overlook the garden. Trade them flowers and vegetables for a protective eye.
Plant raspberries, roses or other thorny plants along the fence as a barrier to fence climbers.
Harvest all ripe fruit and vegetables on a daily basis. Red tomatoes falling from the vines invite trouble.
Plant potatoes, other root crops or a less popular vegetable such as kohlrabi along the side walk or fence.

Children's Plots

Children included in the garden process become champions of the cause rather than vandals of the garden. Therefore your garden may want to allocate some plots specifically for children. The "children's garden" can help present your idea to local day cares, foster grandparent programs, church groups, etc.
Consider offering free small plots in the children's garden to children whose parents already have a plot in the garden.

People Problems and Solutions

Angry neighbors and bad gardeners pose problems for a community garden. Usually the two are related. Neighbors complain to municipal governments about messy, unkempt gardens or rowdy behavior; most gardens can ill afford poor relations with neighbors. Therefore, choose your member guidelines carefully so you have procedures to follow when members fail to keep their plots clean or cause problems. A well-organized garden with committed members can overcome almost any obstacle.

[From "Starting a Community Garden" http://www.communitygarden.org/pubs/starting.html with modifications by the editor.]

The Squatter's Handbook
http://www.squat.net/archiv/squatbook1/index.html

This book has been put together by a group of people concerned with the everyday survival and basic needs of people in our community. The group is called 'Self Help Housing'. Through this booklet we hope to provide much needed realistic information to people that need it.

We advocate occupant controlled housing.
We believe that everyone has a right to a home.
We see the present system of housing as creating homelessness and high rents because it is based on profit and property NOT people.
All land in Australia is stolen land from the Aboriginal people.
We believe that governments in all their forms hinder a real solution to the problem of housing the worlds people.
We aim to create an atmosphere where people have equal decision making powers. We make decisions by consensus.

Why squat?

Housing is a basic right for everybody. Houses should not be empty while there are people without homes to live in.

People are living without electricity, hot water and food in order to pay huge rents that 'the market' demands, much to the delight of unscrupulous property owners and estate agents. Tenancy with a signed lease doesn't actually provide much more security than squatting, though gives a legal recognition to the occupant. Tenancy laws generally though are there to protect the property owners, NOT the tenants necessarily. Landowners arbitrarily raise rents and many a tenant knows the possibility of maintenance and repairs from most land owners and estate agents. Real Estate agents discriminate against single parents, young, old, low income earners and anyone who isn't pretty well capable of actually buying a house.Chances of finding acceptable and affordable housing on the private market is nearly impossible, the waiting list on public housing lists are years long and government support for public housing is virtually nothing. People already occupy run down dilapidated houses due to having nowhere else to go.

Squatters have very little legal recognition and the only way squatters can generally keep their houses is to help each other and be organized and seek support. Such support is essential to organize repairs and to resist harassment and evictions by landowners immediately. It is important not to be intimidated or bluffed into leaving your home before you have fought to stay there.

Who owns empties?

Government departments own empty houses, due to mismanagement and bureaucratic delays many houses can remain empty for many years. Private developers keep houses empty so that they can make a fast buck, or maintain the 'market rent' by limiting the available housing. Greedy individuals own houses that are left empty because they don't need them to live in.

Government houses

Properties owned by public authorities (such as the Dept. of Transportation, Dept. of Housing, Education Dept., etc. - yes many of these different public bodies own quite a lot of property in various locations and may include livable houses that are left unoccupied for years) will generally require some level of negotiation, unless in the rare case they have been completely forgotten about. The time to negotiate may vary, but when you are discovered and requested to leave then an approach to a level of the administration responsible for properties can not do any harm, question the representative about who is responsible for making decisions about the property and approach then directly if necessary, by phone or in person with a friend or two.

Privately owned houses

Privately owned houses may be left empty for a number of reasons. A deceased estate may have no living relatives or interested parties, or they may be willing to allow you to 'look after' the house. Deceased estates where there are no living relatives are administered by the Public Trustees office, and it may take many years for the fate of the property to be settled. Generally private owners will ask you personally to leave or call the police and get them to remove you if necessary. Quite often the case is that no charges will laid if there is resistance or antagonism. Quite often the first contact with anyone will be the neighbors, who will eventually have to contend with anyway, it's worthwhile to present yourself as honestly and openly as possible.

How do I do it?

Finding empty houses is generally pretty easy, an unkempt look, mail oozing out of the mailbox, overgrown garden, power off (check the electricity meter to see if the powers on), broken windows and doors etc. You should always knock on the door before entering or when checking out a house. Sometimes old people are living in their home without electricity in rundown states. Take a closer look inside and out, is there thick dust dust inside? no obvious signs of occupation? check how many rooms the house has, are any floorboards missing? check the overall structure of the place, are the gas and electricity meters still there? You need to know what to bring back to secure the house and fix it up if necessary. It is important to find out who owns the property so you are aware of the owners as the neighbours are and so you'll know who you can speak to, to negotiate if necessary.

Only the owner or the agent of the owner (which can, but isn't necessarily the police) can legally evict you or ask you to leave, not the neighbors or the police without direction from the owner. The police may however take it upon themselves to act against people they know to be occupying property without the owners permission, this may be illegal, but by then you're generally out of the house and looking for somewhere else.

Find out as much as you can about the house. The your local land titles office, is another way to find out who owns property. The system there may seem mind-boggling but it provides information on recent transactions and proposed development plans. T he staff there are quite helpful and you can't be denied access to the information, though maybe have to pay for more detailed information. Getting in is generally quite easy, often broken windows or doors previously forced by other visitors provide access. Vandalism is often an indication of vacant houses, the local kids maybe use the place, this makes it not so hard to just walk right in (besides being a great argument for people living in houses rather than leaving them empty).

During the day on a weekday is actually the best time to check out houses, less conspicuous and you can see more. It's best to just go for a look first without any tools or anything that might justify a break and enter. As long as you don't damage any par t of the property it's OK, if you do then leave and return at a later time if OK. It's not always good to have tools such as crow bars lying around as the police may try to charge someone for breaking and entering.

It can sometimes take quite sometime for owners to realize that anyone is occupying the house, anything from a few hours to a day to a few weeks even. This time should be used for getting the house together, fixing things up, checking the wiring and water etc. It's a good idea to get services such as electricity and gas on as quickly as possible, so you can cook and maintain a life at your new home. Try to keep the house occupied constantly for the first few days and weeks or until you come to some agreement over remaining there with the owner. Get support from other squatters, friends and others in the local area.

If after a few weeks you're still there and have heard nothing from the owners you can start to get a bit more comfortable, it is harder to evict well established households than people who appear to be just using the place to crash in. First thing to do is change the locks and secure the house. Most barrel locks are easily replaced with a few tools (screwdriver, hacksaw, pliers etc.) and are available from hardware shops. Deadlocks may have to sawn off and replaced totally, these cost more but are more secure. Doors or windows that can't be immediately repaired can have wood or board nailed on them to provide temporary security.

Services

Water, electricity and other essential services can not be denied to you, though if it is known that you are
squatting services may be denied to you, this is against the law, you may however be required to pay a security deposit.

Water and toilets

If the water is off at the taps find the main and turn it back on, after checking the pipes. If water has been turned off from not paying water rates then you can approach the water authority to pay of some off to get the water back on. If the plumbing isn't in tact, hoses and clamps can be used for at least temporary plumbing. If the toilet is broken a new one can be cemented in and a bucket used if a cistern is unavailable. If the sewerage is blocked it may need to be cleared, with an electric eel or something similar, take care with old piping.

Electricity and Gas

If the wiring is OK, you have a legal right to have the electricity connected, but may have to pay a security deposit. You may be required to show proof that you are living at the house with a lease, just say you're living there and that you have a right to services. It isn't actually a necessarily good idea to tell them you're squatting. If the wiring is damaged or broken get someone who knows what they're doing to fix it. The same applies to gas services.

Eviction! and legalities

Essentially you have no rights as a squatter but if you are threatened with eviction there are things you do to postpone eviction or even negotiate a settlement that means you can stay. Only the owner or the representative of the owner has the legal right to evict you, so don't be intimidated by the cops or neighbors without checking. It's important to try and talk to the evictors, evictions have been stopped at the last moment. Quite often you will be told lies as to the history and future plans for the houses, demolition, renovation etc., or at least the truth is bent in an effort to get you to leave.

If you are asked by the owner, or an agent of the owner (who may be the police) to leave and you don't then you can be arrested for trespass under the Enclosed Lands Act.

Things you can do to resist eviction include:

Contact your local squatters group (or start your own) for support.
Get friends and other squatters to come around when eviction is due, people showing support can stall eviction.

Leaflet or door knock the surrounding houses, try to get some local community support.
For public authorities visiting, and perhaps protesting outside of, the offices of the organization can sometimes cause them to back down from evictions.
Barricade yourself in. This can however be dangerous to your health, as the cops are generally more 'pissed-off' when they get in and arrest is much more likely, the police may take many days to evict a heavily barricaded squat.
Talk to the media about the situation, though be careful as the media may not portray you and the issue in a favorable light. Utilize alternative media, local papers notice-boards etc.

If you resist or are violent or abusive you will most likely face more severe charges (and larger fines) if the police have to remove you. It is obviously best to talk with the police and any other representatives of the owner outside the house, have someone outside to talk with the police if necessary. If you are arrested you will be taken to the police station, your name and fingerprints will be taken and you will probably be released quite quickly.

* * *

How to Squat a Building
http://www.squat.net/archiv/squatbook2/index.html

This little book has been put together to help people with little or no money find a solution to their housing
problems. We hope that after reading it, people will look at an abandoned building in a totally new light. You might think that living in the conditions we describe in this book is pretty crude. We hope you won't be forced to live like

this. But if it sounds better than what you've got now, we hope you'll be inspired to give it a try.

We will go through a step-by-step guide on how to find your building, what to look for, and the cheapest and easiest ways of making it comfortable. Once you are in the building, you will have to deal with the law eventually, so we have included a section covering some basics to keep the police from messing you up. We aim in this book to show methods that you can use to live more comfortably and safely than on the street. We believe that -- even if you have no money at all and don't want to have anything to do with other people -- you will still find the ideas in this book useful. It may be less work and in some ways more comfortable to live in a shelter. However, we believe that if you can manage to take an empty building, you will have a home with more self-respect and more independence than just about anyone. You can get off the street or out of the shelter and make a decent home for yourself very simply. If you do, we hope that you will use whatever political, legal, or other means you can to keep the powers-that-be from making you homeless again.

You can improve a vacant lot without being busted for trespassing -- insist on your right to squat on unused PUBLIC property.

1. How to Form a Group

This first part is often the trickiest, since a bad, un-together group will do more damage to the project than the city government will in many cases. The people you live and work with are more important than the building that you chose. One of the most important aspects of a group is diversity. Every group has its own style: some are more political than others; some like to party; some like to be real business-like and legal; some are arty; others are just trying to get over and off the street. Whatever your group is like, you should keep in mind that not only do you have to relate to each other, you also have to relate to your community. If your neighborhood is all the same ethnic group as the members of your group, you don't have to worry about diversity. But if your group has only token members of the main ethnic group in the neighborhood, then you could get yourself in some trouble.

A group of people living and working together who all agree on everything cannot exist: someone in the group is always going to have to shelve, give up or compromise on an idea. As you will be living in the unfamiliar condition of having no landlord, no way of calling in the police to settle your differences, you should give some thought to the kind of people you want to live with.

Once you've decided to squat, its up to you to make the first contact. How you do this depends on your situation. If you live in a welfare hotel or a shelter, you will have a readily-available supply of people who are in the same situation as you. After studying this book, the next time someone says to you, "God! I'm sick of this shit," spring the idea on them. Sit down, have a coffee and go over the pros and cons of squatting. We're sure you're going to disagree with some of the things we say, just as sure as you will come up with ideas of your own (with enough energy and luck). Communicating with people in this way you will soon find yourself in a group which is seriously considering the option of squatting.

We feel that six adults is a big enough group to go to a building (figure out yourselves what "adult" means). If for some reason your group is only two or three people, don't be discouraged. Go ahead with the project, since once a building is opened, within weeks you'll have people coming around, looking for a place to stay.

If for some reason you happen to be isolated, that is, living alone in a hotel, or even in the park, and you can't get enough people interested or organized, then don't give up! Remember that this city is full of homeless people and all you need is a few of them to start your group. You could advertise on lamp posts and bulletin boards. For example: "Wanted: people interested in homesteading. Contact ____." (Note: some squatters call themselves homesteaders when dealing with the public, but in many areas no one understands what this means.) The groups listed at the end of this book may help you make contracts. We have found that a set of rules is must for any new group. The rules should be discussed in detail and agreed upon by all concerned. They should be written down, since verbal agreements tend to get pretty vague after a few months.

Here is one set of house rules you can think about if you need ideas for your own:

No hard drugs: they can be used as a pretext to throw everyone out of the building.

No violence.

No stealing.

Breaking any of these first three rules can get you thrown out of the squat, though everyone should remember that squatters have no legal right to throw anyone out or evict them.

Every member must work a minimum of hours per month on the common areas of the building. Jobs may include childcare and other non-construction work. What work people do depends on their abilities.

Every member must pay a certain amount per month to a construction fund for the common areas of the building: roof, stairs, plumbing, electricity, etc.

The construction funds should be deposited in a joint account, which requires at least two signatures to get money from. The name on the account should be something like "The 537 E. 5th St. Homestead Association."

All new members must go through a trial period in which they work on the building with old members for a month, and can then be accepted as a member by agreement of all the other members.

We want to emphasize again that these rules are our own, and you will probably need to adapt them to your own circumstances. We also hope people will keep in mind the cruel wave of evictions that has made so many people homeless when they consider whether or not some offense is serious enough to throw a member out.

2. Finding a Building and Investigating It

The way to find a building is to simply walk around the streets with your eyes open. Try to concentrate on areas where people are already squatting or homesteading, as you will usually get less hassle from the neighbors if you squat there. Look at the buildings surrounding the one you've got your eye on.

If the surroundings look as if they've been renovated for well-off people, this may mean more hassles from neighbors and police. The neighbors can be dealt with just by talking to them and explaining your case. Give them some figures on how many people are homeless. Tell them who is in your group and how you came to be in the situation you're in. Be realistic and honest. See what you can find out from them. Ask about the history of the building and whether or not any one has been using it since it was abandoned.

Try to get an idea if any community groups, politicians, gangs or real estate operators have an eye on the building. If so, figure out if they are for real and, if not, whether you will be able to take the building and keep them off your back. If you think they are for real, you might approach them and see if you can work together. You may also meet squatters who still have room in their buildings and are looking for new members.

Be polite, but be careful of people who are in too big a hurry to be your friend. Be particularly careful to avoid antagonizing any of your neighbors during the first month, that is, until you've established your residence. As for dealing with the police, refer to the chapter on legal hassles.

You will notice that some buildings have been painted with squares. These squares are painted by the city government to indicate the status of the building. An empty square indicates that the building is abandoned. A square with a slash in it indicates that fire fighters should be cautious entering the building. A square with an X in it indicates that the building is condemned. Don't presume the building is not good: perfectly good buildings get condemned all the time.

It's worth knowing whether a building is still privately owned or has been taken over by the city government. If the owner of a building shows up and wants you out, it is easier for him to get you evicted than it is for the city to get you out of one of their buildings.

Also, if it ever gets to the point that you want to hold on to the building you have squatted and stay there over a long term, it is possible to do so with city-owned buildings, but practically impossible with privately-owned buildings. People on the block may know if the city owns a building or not, but to be sure you should check at city hall.

Take the exact address of the building with you. In the office, look first at the Lot and Block maps. Find the block number and the lot number of the address in which you're interested. The records are kept according to these numbers and not according to addresses. When you have this information, check out the micro film for the building (you need ID to do this). When you're reading the microfilm, go directly to the last few pages in the records to find the last transaction, because this will tell you who owns the building now. The city government ends up owning a building when the previous owner didn't pay the taxes on it; the city takes the building (forecloses) in lieu of back taxes. So look for a statement of foreclosure.

Have a look at the exterior walls of the building you're researching. You may have to wait until you've gotten inside before you can get to the back of the building, but what you need to look at is the same. Are there major holes in the masonry? If they can't be filled or covered, they might be significant structural defects. Are there signs of bulging or sagging? Are there wide gaps where the mortar joints should be? If the answer is "Yes" to any of these questions, find another building to squat.

Is the fire escape pulling loose from the wall? Is it falling apart? Is the cornice (the part that sticks out from the face of the building along the roof) broken apart and dangling? If the answer to any of these questions is "Yes," you've got dangers to people walking on the sidewalk in front of the building, and so you will have to fix these problems. But remember: though a cornice is just a decorative frill (and so can be removed or tied back so it won't fall), its deterioration can be a sign of overall deterioration. A dangerous cornice is a building code violation and can get your squat closed down.

OK, so at this point you've got your eye on a certain building and, from the outside, it doesn't look too bad. Now for a look inside. To be on the safe side as far as getting hassled goes, it may be best to go in the evening when it is dark. But it may be that, after familiarizing yourself with the neighborhood, you feel comfortable with entering the building during the daytime. Either way, bring a strong flashlight and be very careful where you step and what you hold on to. It's very easy -- if you are not watching what you are doing -- to step through a rotted floor board or lose your balance when a piece of broken window frame comes loose in your hand. The riskiest part of an abandoned building is usually at the top, because there are usually some bad leaks in the roof that will cause rot. But dangers can be found aplenty on the lower floors, too: vandalism and fire damage can be found anywhere in a building, and years of leakage will result in lower-floor rot as well.

Normally the easiest way in is through the back. You can climb up the fire escape and go in a window. Even if the back is bricked up, you can get to the roof, and from there it is often easy to find a way in. Now, say there's no way into the back -- what do you do? You're going to need about five people and a 12-foot ladder. Two people are needed as lookouts; one person holds the ladder while the remaining two enter the building. It's always useful to have one person with you who has some knowledge of old buildings, so if no one in your group knows old buildings, you should get someone who does to help out.

If you are unfortunate enough to choose a building that is totally bricked up, your only way in will probably be on the roof. If you can't get up to the roof, you will have to chisel out a couple of concrete blocks from a window and get in through the opening you've created. We recommend that as few people as possible do this so that too much attention isn't attracted.

It is easy to get in if you can get friendly with someone who lives next door: you can get onto the roof of the building you're interested in through this person's building.

So! After days of planning, hassles, people not showing up, and trying to get organized, you're finally inside and ready to inspect the building. It will almost certainly look and smell like shit: it will be full of old rotting furniture, rubble and ceilings that have fallen down all over the place. Some apartments in the building will be burnt-out. Don't be discouraged by any of this, for it's all quite normal.

Inspect the roof. Check it for holes. Look for missing, burnt or rotted joists, which are the timbers that support roofs and floors. Rot can be tested by sticking a knife in the lumber as far as it will go. When checking for rot, find a spot where the leaking water soaks in and doesn't dry up right away. Up to an inch may be rotted or burnt, and the timbers might still be OK. The ends of the joists can suffer a lot of deterioration without endangering the structure, but the joists in the middle cannot be weakened without risking collapse. Check the parapet walls around the roof to see if (or how badly) they are falling apart and what will need to be done to them to make them safe.

Inspect the stairs. If you're lucky, there will be nothing wrong with the stairs except for some missing steps. If the building has no staircase at all, you will have a lot of work to do, perhaps too much. Until you are able to replace the stairs, you will have to use the fire escape or a ladder in place of stairs. There are enough buildings with stairs around that you may be wasting your time on one that doesn't have any staircase at all. One squat in NYC was evacuated by the Fire Department for not having stairs. Eviction by DOH (Department of Housing, which is typically the landlord of city-owned buildings) can be delayed by legal means for a long time. But evacuation by the city's Fire, Health or Buildings Departments is swift and hard to contest.

Inspect the floor joists. These are the timbers that support the floors. Make note where they are missing or damaged. If the floors are sloping more than an inch or so, this may mean that the structure has shifted so much that it has become dangerous. If timbers are dangerously damaged, they can be braced by scavenged lumber (four-by-fours are best).

Inspect the sewer pipes. The toilets will typically be smashed or missing, but the water pipes may be in salvageable condition. Follow the waste pipes through the building down to the basement, checking for holes along the way. Look for holes in the walls which DOH -- upon taking over the building -- may have made in order to damage the pipes and thereby discourage squatters. Copper water pipes will certainly have been stripped, but if there were steel pipes originally, they may still be in place and useable. If your plumbing is in OK condition, you can probably get your water running pretty soon. Otherwise you can get water from a fire hydrant, which can be opened with a pipe wrench.

Inspect the front door. If the front of the building has been sealed with concrete blocks, make sure that the door or any windows are ready to use before you knock the blocks out. If there is already a working door you can use or if you have to knock a hole in the block wall and install a door in the opening (see below), make sure you are ready to keep the building secured once you have opened it and made your use of the building public.

3. Getting In

Now, you're ready to move in. If the area you're in is run-down, it's possible that no one will bother you while you smash out the concrete blocks. With a twelve-pound sledge hammer, a door sized opening can take as few as seven-and-a-half minutes to create. Quickly get all the broken blocks off the sidewalk and into the building; sweep up to remove signs of your work. You may want to keep a low profile and do this while look-outs watch for the cops, or bring along lots of friends and supporters, and dare the cops to intervene. It is also possible, and it may be preferable, to work from the inside out, to chisel the blocks out discreetly, one by one.

You should have a door and frame prepared to set into the new opening. Measure and mark the hole you've opened with your new door in mind. In any case, work quickly and as quietly as possible. Once inside, unless there is a useable door in place, either set up a barricade or install a door. Steel door frames and doors are easily scavenged from demolition or rehab sites. Unless you're pretty strong, it will take two people to carry a steel door or a cart to roll it on.

To install the front door, set the frame in the opening and fill in around the edges with pieces of broken blocks and some mortar (a couple of bags of mortar mix should be enough). Make certain that the bottom of the door frame is exactly as wide as the top when it is set in place. Otherwise the door won't work. Use a board that has been cut to exactly the right width to keep the correct space at the bottom of the frame while it is being installed. Make sure the frame is straight up and down and not crooked, bent or twisted out of line in the opening. If the frame you have is bent, you can straighten it with a hammer, laying it on the pavement and using a block of wood to protect it from getting dented up too much.

Install the frame so that the door will open into the building. There are steel tabs on the inside of the door frame that are meant to be bent out so that they will anchor the frame into the mortar joints in the block wall. As you fill in the opening around the door frame with mortar and block, be sure that the inside of the frame itself is filled with mortar and block pieces, because the frame is not solid by itself. If you're not able to afford or install a heavy duty bolt lock on the door, a heavy chain and a padlock will do the trick. Pass the chain through a hole in the door and around the door frame.

Paint the name of your group and your address on the door. For the example: "The 537 East Fifth Street Homestead Association and Neighborhood Improvement Committee." Do all the work that you can in advance so that on your opening day you can simply set your door, lock and door frame in place all in one go.

If this is more than you can manage right away, you'll need to rig up some sort of barricade for the doorway and have someone inside at all times to let others in and out. You should not leave your building unattended in any case, especially right after you move in. It is good to have someone on hand to watch the place when most people are out during the day. The risk from police and other evildoers is high right after the building is occupied. Don't let anyone in that you're not sure about; don't let any cops or city officials in under any circumstances unless they have a warrant. (See the legal section for what to do if the police do have a warrant.) Keep the door closed and locked at all times, don't sit out on your stoop with the door unlocked or open. Needless to say, you're in the building illegally, and so there is no need to make your front door an open invitation to cops and thieves.

Nothing is worse than coming home to find that your tools, sleeping bags and heaters have been ripped off -- except maybe walking upstairs to your apartment and meeting a junk-sick thief running downstairs with your radio in one hand and a knife in the other.

Your security depends on making it so difficult to enter your building that most thieves will pass it up. If your building looks funky and people on the street can see that only poor people live there, you won't need as much security. You should keep your ground floor windows barred or sealed with concrete block or even plywood. Eliminate hand and footholds by knocking them off or by setting nails or broken glass in masonry cement or roofing cement. More of the same or coiled barbed wire around the base of the fire escape and continuing across the face of the building at the second floor level will help to deter climbers. Grates on windows facing the fire escape are good, but it will take a lot of them to do your whole building. It might be good enough to bolt full sheets of plywood to the outside of the fire escape railing on the second floor. This will make a wall around the fire escape too high to climb over. You can top it off with a coil of barbed wire or nails. The roof is another point of entry, so be sure that the penthouse door is secured.

Note well that having a front door with a lock, beds and other basics such as a kitchen is good for your own well-being, but it is also important in establishing that you are a resident and not a trespasser. It may seem like a small point, but it is actually quite important. It can make the difference between getting run out of the building by the cops if they feel like doing it and getting them to back down so that they will have to wait until DOH manages to go through the lengthy proceedings necessary to legally evict you.

4. Emergency Repairs

In most cases, the most important repair that abandoned buildings need is work on the roof, which will almost certainly leak. The roof will typically have a large hole or two in it caused by a fire, fire fighters or vandals from the city government. For your own comfort, it may only be necessary to locate a room into which there is no leakage. However, a building in which the roof leaks will have lots of spaces in which no one will be able to live. You want to avoid squatting in a building such as this, because the more people you have living in your building, the better your chances of resisting eviction and protecting yourself against hassles from the city and from thieves and drug dealers. The more people you have, the more comfortable and secure you can make your place.

The long-term maintenance of a building depends more on the roof than on any other single thing. If the roof is not maintained, it will eventually rot until it collapses. The floors will go and, sooner or later, the exterior walls will collapse. Then what you got is a pile of useless, rotten timber and broken masonry -- which will cost the city a lot of money to clear out and turn into a vacant lot. Unfortunately, letting abandoned buildings rot until they collapse is just what cities are doing with the buildings it owns. Don't let your city get away with it!

Clear the roof of any debris and sweep it clean. Patch the holes. You can lay 5/8-inch-thick plywood boards over them. Try using mineralized felt paper and roofing tar as a way of patching holes. If your roof is so far gone that you have to cover it entirely, get someone who works as a roofer to help you out. To do this kind of work, you should be able to get the materials donated by local charitable groups or organizations.

[Note: if you have some work to get done, its helpful to write your plans down on paper, step by step, and keep track of any changes you make in the plans as you work. Make drawings or diagrams that describe and show how to do the jobs that are hard to explain in words; they will make it easier to organize and help get people involved in the project. Books such as the Reader's Digest Complete Do-it-

Yourself Manual or Carpentry and Construction are handy for dealing with construction problems and can be found in the public libraries. We've found that books dealing specifically with roofing, electrical work, plumbing and other "specialized" trades are also easily obtained.]

If repairing the roof is too big a project to take on right away, you can use polyethylene plastic sheeting to protect the roof temporarily. Get a hundred-foot roll of 4 mil plastic that is twenty feet wide, and a couple of buckets of flashing cement. (Be sure to get flashing cement, because other kinds of roofing tar won't do the trick.) Begin by clearing and sweeping the surface of the roof clean. Fill or cover up all the holes. Make sure that the roof drain is clear and unclogged at all times. Unroll the plastic so that the entire roof is covered. If you have to cut the plastic to cover the entire roof evenly, make sure the lap joints where the edges of the plastic meet each other are perfectly sealed with flashing cement, leaving not even the smallest gap. Drape the ends of the plastic over the parapet walls on all four sides. Lay bricks or boards on top of the plastic so that the wind doesn't blow it around. Fasten the ends to the walls with the flashing cement or with boards that have nails driven in to the mortar joints between the brick in the parapets.

This is a somewhat temporary protection, but if you do a good job, it should make it through the winter. But summer heat will certainly cook the plastic until it breaks apart. To make your plastic roof a bit more permanent, spread flashing cement over the entire surface of the roof before laying the plastic down. Make sure that there are no bubbles in the plastic and that all of the plastic is stuck to the cement below.

If you have leftover plastic, you can use it to seal the places where window are missing. Use lath, which is the thin slat with which plaster walls used to be made, to nail the plastic to the window frame or staple it up using strips of cardboard as reinforcement. You can also use leftover plastic to make tents for your living areas: these can be really handy in the cold winter months.

Shore the place up. Close off any areas of the building where the floor or the roof is unsafe. Then if you can't replace, repair or reinforce the damaged timbers, you can brace them with four-by-fours or pairs of two-by-fours that have been nailed together. Be sure to brace the damaged timber against something solid or otherwise you're just making the problem worse. The brace must ultimately be supported by a bearing wall or footing. You can brace down to a joist if its near a load-bearing wall.

You can generally assume that brick, block, or stone exterior walls are load-bearing walls and that interior walls (studs with lath and plaster) are probably not. However, just because a wall is not a load bearing wall doesn't mean you can take it out safely. Even if it is only a partition wall it can't be safely removed if there are walls in the corresponding places on the floors above it. Even if there is no wall above the one you're thinking of removing, you have to make certain that the floor joists above are not being supported by or, as a result of settling, come to rest upon it.

Missing stair steps can be temporarily replaced with wooden ones. If there's no other way to secure them in place, drive nails through the top and then go underneath and bend the nails' tips over so that they will hook on to the steel part of the stairway. Cover holes in the floor with plywood until you can get around to replacing the missing flooring.

Holes in sewage pipes can be patched by a variety of methods, including fibre glass, auto body filler with window screen, and even roofing cement. The waste pipes have already been discussed: they should be tested to see if they will drain but not leak. Until you've got the pipes working, you'll have to dump your piss and other waste waters in the storm sewer in the street. Do not dump your waste waters out the window!

To remove debris, start at the top of your building and work down. Don't throw stuff out of upper story windows, because you may draw justified complaints and hassles from your neighbors. Since you may not be able to get the kind of tube that contractors use to get stuff down from the upper floors to the street, you may have to take up the flooring in the same corner on each floor and throw the unwanted stuff down through the holes. Once at the ground floor, the debris can be chucked out the back of the building or bagged and taken out for bulk refuse collection by the Sanitation Department. (It might take quite a few tries to get a response from Sanitation; it depends on who you talk to. When you find someone who is helpful, get their name and only deal with them in the future.) If you use the through-the-floor method, hang a curtain of plastic that stretches from floor to ceiling on each of the affected floors, so that dust or asbestos particles won't spread all over the place.

Asbestos causes cancer and other serious diseases. There is no safe level of exposure to asbestos fibers. Studies of exposure to asbestos suggest that as little as one day can result in significant damage to the respiratory system and disease. But the health risks of asbestos come into play only if the fibers are released from the material and enter the air. If the material is in excellent condition and not in a living area, left it alone. A greater hazard can be created than originally existed if the asbestos is removed by inexperienced people. Only trained asbestos abatement professionals should remove materials containing asbestos, which is typically found in boiler and pipe insulation. It may also be found in radiator covers, fire-proof doors and certain kinds of light-weight construction blocks.

If you see insulation that is not fiberglass, that is ripped, split, ragged or powdery looking (don't touch it!), you should get the material tested for asbestos. Contact the White Lung Association (http://www.whitelung.org/) and arrange to have a sample tested. The WLA also gives courses in asbestos removal.

If for some reason you must handle asbestos, be sure to wear disposable gloves and a respirator that has been approved for use with asbestos. A half-face respirator equipped with a High Efficiency Particulate Absolute filter will be sufficient. Keep the asbestos wet. The weight of the water will keep the asbestos particles from becoming air-borne.

Note: it's a good idea to take photographs or shoot videotape of the work you have done on the building, even if it seems as if you are documenting crimes you have committed. You're not! Save your receipts for any materials you buy. Keep records of the jobs you did and the hours (or weeks or months) it took you and your group to do them. All of this is documentation that you are a homesteader and not a trespasser, a vagrant or a drifter (common stereotypes for squatters).

5. Light, Heat, and Fire Safety

Candles are the easiest way to provide light. The best kind are in tall glass containers, the kind that often have pictures of saints or magic charms on them. They last a long time and are not easily blown out. The cold does not easily shatter them. Somewhat better light can be provided by old-fashioned kerosene lamps. If you use them, trim your wicks now and then to make the brightest flame and least smoke. Coleman lanterns generate light as bright as incandescent light. The kerosene type is safer than the gasoline ones, although they take longer to light. Kerosene is generally cheaper and easier to get than white gas.

In New York City, heating is not merely a creature comfort in the winter. Tenants can sue their landlords for not providing enough heat and it is well known that are deaths from hypothermia among people living on the street and in unheated apartments.

We think kerosene heaters -- though they can be messy and fire hazards -- are a practical and economical means of heating. Kerosene heaters aren't legal but can be bought in the outer boroughs and New Jersey. It's worth it to get your kerosene outside of Manhattan since the price will be much higher in this borough of the city. Please! do not store your kerosene in rooms in which heaters will be operated and never go to sleep with the heater on.

Get a wood stove if you can, because it can be a very cheap source of heat. Wood stoves are also safer and healthier than kerosene heaters. If you can't find one, you can make one from a discarded steel drum.

Start by making two holes in the drum: one to put the wood in (this one will need a door to keep smoke from backing out into the air), and another for the smoke to go out and into a flue pipe that you will have to make. The easiest way to cut these two holes is to drill a pivot hole to start each new cut, and then make your cuts using a jig saw with a sheet-metal blade. If there is no way for you to make use of power tools, you could even cut the holes using a cold chisel. The hole for the flue must be measured to fit the flue pipe: four or five inches in diameter seems good to us. The swinging door will have to be attached by hinges that are located along the bottom of the opening. The door will also have to be lockable.

A damper will allow you to control how fast the fire burns without opening and closing the door (which is also a method of controlling the blaze). A damper can be made by cutting a round piece of sheet metal slightly less than the diameter of the flue. Punch two holes on opposite ends from each other in the flue pipe. Stick a piece of heavy wire through the holes and attach the round piece to it. When the round piece is in the up-and-down position it allows the smoke through freely and thus stokes the fire; the more you turn it toward the side-to-side position it restricts the flow of smoke and thus the pace of the blaze.

You will need to set the stove on some kind of support that will keep it well above floor level. You can use anything you can find -- bricks, old bed frames, etc. -- as long as it won't burn or char. Never burn painted, shellacked or treated wood in your stoves: they give off poisonous fumes and gases.

Since complaints can be made to the Fire Department about smoke coming from your squat, it is important that the smoke from your stove runs out of a proper flue or chimney. If your building has a chimney, make sure it is clear of obstructions. To see if the chimney is clear, you can put a flashlight in one of the flue holes, take yourself up to the roof and look down to see if you can see the light. You can locate the chimney stack in your apartment because it sticks out into the room from the wall on either side of it. The hole for the flue in the chimney may be open or bricked up or completely hidden by plaster or sheet rock. If so, just chop it open with a hammer.

If you don't have a chimney or the chimney is blocked and you can't clear it, then you'll have to chop a flue hole in the wall or run the flue pipe out a window. In either case, the flue pipe should go all the way up and past the roof by five feet.

Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms are well worth having for your own safety as well as in case any city
officials manage to get inside your building and have a chance to look around for code violations. Place the smoke alarms so that the stoves don't set them off continually. Keep your place well ventilated no matter how you heat it in the winter, and never leave a fire or a heater unattended.

Keep passages, halls, stairs and fire escapes clear of obstructions. Place fire extinguishers or buckets of sand or water on every floor and in locations where they can be easily reached. Form an arson watch. A
round-the-clock fire and safety watch may be advisable for your situation. If so, there may be already an arson watch group or community safety patrol of some sort in your neighborhood. These organizations are well worth joining or starting yourself with others squatters and/or with like-minded tenants in the area.

[Note added February 1997: On the afternoon of 9 February 1997, a small, accidental fire broke out on the second floor of the East Fifth Street Squat. The cause of the fire was a faulty electric space heater. The residents evacuated the building and left it in the hands of the Fire Department, which delayed in putting out the blaze, thus making the fire more damaging than it needed to have been. Once the Fire Department was through, the combined forces of the police and the Department of HPD conspired to illegally keep the residents from returning to their squatted building, which was deemed "dangerous" and demolished right in front of its former occupants within a day or two after the fire. The moral of the story seems clear: put your fires out yourself and trust the Fire Department as much as you do the police!]

6. Makeshift Toilets, Water, and Cooking

Use buckets or empty bottles for waste waters. Keep the buckets from getting foul by never putting toilet paper in them and by rinsing them with lime or a disinfectant. Construction sites are easy sources of empty five gallon buckets. As far as shitting goes, do it on a few sheets of the New York Times, wrap it up, put it in a plastic bag and throw the bag into a trash can on the street. To avoid unnecessary hassles, do not use the trash cans owned by your neighbors. If you let your place get unsanitary, you can have complaints lodged against you by the Health Department, which will not only get you thrown out in a big hurry, but will also make hassles for other squatters.

Keep your food hanging in a bag or on a shelf hanging by wire so that mice and bugs and cats can't get to it. Do the same for your garbage and dispose of it every day. This way you won't get any mice or bugs and your cats will only eat what they are supposed to.

To make an alcohol stove start with an empty can. Loosely pack it with cloth: gauze bandage is best. You will need something to set the can on so it doesn't rest directly on the burner. You can place a grill (an old refrigerator shelf will do nicely) on top of some bricks. Or you can place the burner can inside a larger one. For example, you could put a beer can inside of a coffee can. (Your pot would then sit on top of the coffee can.) The larger can should have holes punched around the top with a can opener, so that when you put a pot on top the burner won't be sealed off from the air. Punch holes around the bottom rim of the can to help the flow of air. You may find that holes around the top of the burner can are also needed. To fire it up, pour rubbing alcohol on the cloth until it is soaked and then light it. The stove should burn for about 15 minutes. (Never refuel while its still burning, and never use anything stronger than 70% isopropyl alcohol as fuel.) Enclose the whole thing in a metal reflector to keep the heat in and cut down on drafts. Otherwise, it'll take forever to get anything hot. If water accumulates in the gauze, just take it out and squeeze it dry.

You might consider using propane camp stoves with large tanks and hoses attached as your food-cooking device. They are very practical and economical. You might consider using an ordinary gas stove: they are easy to find on the street, and you can put propane jets on them to make them work better. But you should be careful that the one your are using doesn't leak. A backpack stove is handy for traveling light and is small enough to hide easily in a building in which there are security problems.

To make your squatted apartment space more comfortable, contact the Red Cross and the local churches. They might well give you blankets or sell them to you for cheap. When the weather gets very cold, a tent of some kind around your bed will really make a difference. Insulation can be made by putting rugs or thick cloth on the floors, walls and ceilings. If no one is living above you, you can fill that room with garbage bags filled with newspapers. Newspapers can also be used for wallpaper. Such wallpaper -- especially if it is painted over -- will reduce the problem of old paint or plaster that has begun to flake off.

Windows and panes can be scavenged from construction sites at which buildings are being renovated, and from window suppliers that leave unwanted stuff out on the street. Doors can also be obtained in the same ways.

Electricity, water and other services can all be provided by a variety of methods that you will be able to discover by using your imagination and staying in contact with other squatters. Getting hooked up with the public utilities providers can be a way of strengthening your case that you are community members and not trespassers.

7. Legal Hassles

Every effort you can make to show that you have established as normal as possible a residence will be an advantage in dealing with the law. Operate on the assumption that you are a law-abiding citizen and a legal tenant of the building in which you are squatting until it has been decided otherwise in a court of law. Use your address freely, and get library cards, swimming cards and other forms of ID that have your address on it.

Have mail sent to you at your building. This will help you prove that you live there and that you aren't breaking-and-entering or trespassing. Put your address on the front door and make a mail slot in it. Find out when mail is delivered to your street and be there when the mail carrier comes by. Explain that you are living here and that you will be receiving mail at this location. Sometimes the carriers will be uncooperative, but usually they will be friendly if you are friendly. If friendliness doesn't work, it might be that the carrier you've talked to isn't the regular one, or that several carriers take turns delivering mail to your street and thus don't feel any inclination to helping you out. Try a different mail carrier.

If nothing else works, try the postmaster at the office for your route. He or she might tell you that there has to be a mailbox locked and unlocked by keys for the carriers to deliver mail, or that you are not a legal tenant, or that you don't own the building, blah blah blah. Point out as politely as you can that the building isn't a multiple dwelling unit, that it is undergoing renovation at the moment, and that the addresses on the letters that will be sent to the people who are living there will not have separate apartment numbers on them. Tell the postmaster that you are living there and (more to the point) have not been evicted yet, so your legal status as a tenant simply has not been decided in court as of yet. Tell that bureaucrat that your tenancy is a civil matter between you and the City, and not a criminal matter involving the federal government and your right to receive your mail.

If nothing works, it may actually enable you to get an eviction case thrown out of court. If you cannot get any of your mail because of the Post Office's refusals to deliver it, you literally can't be served with an eviction notice, which typically arrives by mail and is not served in person!

If it is not delivered to your building, your mail will be held for you at the local post office. Once picked up, such mail can still serve as proof of residence.

Never sign for or accept any registered or certified mail until you are absolutely sure it is not from the city government. It could be a summons or an eviction notice!

There is something to be said for putting wild shapes, slogans and colors on the front of your squat: it underlines the changes that the building is going through and shows that you are proud of them and of your role in bringing about these changes. There is also something to be said for making the front of your building look as much like an ordinary building as possible. In either case, working diligently and productively on the front will give your neighbors a chance to size you up, to come out and talk to you. They will respect you when they see you working on your place.

Go to block association meetings and seek their support. Although the members of the block association may be merchants and professionals, they may want to help you if they see that you are making good use of the building and that you are not housing or attracting drug dealers, users, pimps or prostitutes. If there is no block association, you may want to start one. You can rally your neighbors by pointing out that both squatters (or homesteaders) and rent-paying tenants want to stop the twin-headed monster of benign neglect and gentrification. Once you've got your block association together you can go to your local Community Board to seek their support as well. Its also worthwhile to check out whatever housing and tenants' organizations are active in your neighborhood.

If you are confronted by the police or officials from the Department of Housing you have a right to all the protections inherent in the eviction process. You can ask for a postponement of your case because you haven't been able to get a lawyer, or because your lawyer has had insufficient time to prepare your case or cannot appear in court the day your case is to be heard. And so on. In the meantime, you're still living in your building. Since DOH is often bogged down in lengthy eviction proceedings -- some of which it loses -- this bureaucracy may very well try to get other city departments to throw you out.

You cannot be denied welfare benefits because you are a squatter. It is illegal for the Bureau of Child Welfare to take your children from you on the grounds that you are a squatter. Besides, plenty of people pay rent to live in apartments that are in terrible condition; these people's children are not taken from them because of these conditions! Persistence and good legal advice will be your best weapons as you try to make sure your rights are being respected and are not being arbitrarily violated.

Don't let anyone from the city government or the police department into your building, even if they claim they have a warrant. If they do, they can slip it through the mail slot or under the door so you can read it first.
Don't identify yourself or answer any questions through the door.

If you do receive a legal notice with your name on it, don't miss the court date unless you've cleared it with your lawyer or an informed housing activist in advance. If the notice doesn't have your name on it or says "Resident" or "John Doe" or something, definitely do not answer it. It most likely shows that the DOH has not yet made a really serious attempt to find out who each and every one of your group is, and that they are trying to get an easy score with the "Anyone living at this address" bullshit. But you should take the notice to a tenants' rights organizer or housing lawyer for advice, and then take it to the clerk of the court's office so that you can put it on record that nobody with those names live at your building.

If the people in your building start getting eviction notices, be sure that there is always someone living with you (who has proof of residence) who hasn't been named in a notice. In this way, if it comes down to an eviction, DOH won't be able to seal the building since there will still be someone living there that they can't evict yet. Once the "eviction-minus-one" is over and the cops are gone, you can move back in without problem.

If the authorities have served you with notice that the building is going to be evacuated for reasons of public safety, you'll have to come up with a detailed plan that shows how you you are going to repair the problem. You will no doubt need the help of professionals to do this, and you'll their help right away, for you've got only a few days to get a judge to issue a stay of execution order.

At the first sign of trouble, someone should be using your "Eviction-Watch List" to contact all your friends and supporters, so that as many witnesses are on the scene as possible. This will keep the cops on their toes and "best behavior," that is, slightly less likely to start beating people up. If the cops get through your front door, write down their badge numbers and names, demand to see their identification, etc. etc. Have witnesses to absolutely everything. Videotape, audio tape and photograph whenever possible. You have a legal right to make a record of all that takes place. If the cops ask to speak to your leaders, tell them you don't have any. If they ask "Who is in charge?" or if they ask if you are in charge, tell them "Nobody is in charge." Never admit to having leaders, even if you do, and you will (like it or not). At all times, be firm and reasonable with the cops unless you are ready for a fight.

* * *

Infoshops

What is an Infoshop?

An infoshop is a cross between a radical bookstore and a movement archive. Activists go there to read or buy movement literature; buy paraphernalia such as stickers, masks and spray paint; attend meetings, lectures or films; or just plain hang out.

Infoshops are prevalent in Europe, especially in Germany where there are over sixty. They form a decentralized information network, distributing magazines, flyers etc. to local activists and providing information about local activities to other infoshops. Many papers are produced at infoshops and distributed through the infoshop network. When urgent communication is needed, in cases of a state crackdown or fascist attack. Infoshops can call or fax other infoshops who can then mobilize local activists.

The infoshop network is an important part of autonomist left movements in many European countries. Infoshops meet twice a year European wide. At these gatherings infoshop collectives see what other groups are doing, exchange information, and discuss strategy and theory.

Most infoshops rent their space, but many are in squats. Others use part of a cafe or center. Some are run by one collective, while others have a different group in charge each day. None of them have paid positions. Most infoshops have a women-only day either weekly or monthly.

In addition to the groups running the infoshop, other groups use it as a meeting place, and as a mailing address. The latter is especially useful for security reasons. Instead of using a private address, which can be dangerous because of fascists and police repression, groups can have a mailbox at an infoshop. If the group has problems with their mail being open or stolen, they can use a double envelope: inner addressed to the group and outer to the infoshop.

Infoshops could play a useful role here as well. With all the anarchist and leftist papers around, no one person can get them all. Infoshops, receiving numerous movement papers, would help keep the movement better informed. Infoshops can be equipped with a telephone, fax, or computer, making communications that much easier between groups. And infoshops serve the role of a movement center, building community and facilitating action.

This originally appeared in:
Slingshot
3124 Shattuck Ave.

Berkeley, CA 94705
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* * *

Your Friendly Neighborhood Infoshop
By Chuck Munson (chuck@tao.ca)

[This article originally appeared in the January 1998 issue of MaximumRockNRoll]

If you've been a big city punk at any time in the last decade, you've probably visited or at least heard of infoshops. Infoshops combine a social space, zine archive and library, meeting hall, day care center, concert venue and bookstore into one autonomous space. They are usually promoted and organized by anarchist activists, but infoshop supporters and participants aren't necessarily all anarchists. Infoshops are rooted in the DIY (Do-It-Yourself) ethic-they are created by people who are interested in making the revolutionary process happen, not just sitting around and talking about it.

Infoshops have been around for years and are generally thought to have originated in Europe, especially Germany were there were over 60 at one time. They were nurtured by the squatting, autonomist, punk, and anarchist movements. The infoshops in Europe, especially Germany, functioned not only as community centers, but also as mail-drops for groups which had been outlawed by the state. The European shops and autonomous centers inspired the creation of infoshops in North America, but it should be noted that there is a long tradition of radical community centers in the U.S. These are commonly known as peace and justice centers and have been the basis for leftist activist and community organizing.

There have been, and still are, infoshops in just about every big city in North America. They've had some
interesting names: Beehive Infoshop in Washington, D.C., Long Haul in Berkeley, Emma Center in Minneapolis, Croatan in Baltimore, Autonomous Zone in Chicago, 404 Willis in Detroit, Who's Emma in Toronto, Epicenter in San Francisco, and many more.

In the U.S., some infoshops are also known as alternative reading rooms or community media centers. In fact, infoshops have been described as "a cross between a radical bookstore and a movement archive." You can find zine archives and book lending libraries in infoshops. This is a grass roots response to the fact that most public libraries that are either ignorant of radical literature and zines or deliberately exclude such materials from their shelves. Infoshops sell books, zines, and t-shirts, not just to support the community which wants these things, but also as a way to raise money to pay the infoshop's rent.

What happens at infoshops? Infoshops serve as community centers for the local activists, so you'll often find activist groups meeting there. Groups like the IWW, Earth First!, or the Lesbian Avengers might have their regular meetings at an infoshop. You'll also find projects like Food Not Bombs or Book to Prisoners who use an infoshop as a staging area. A FNB group may use the infoshop's kitchen (if it has one) to prepare the day's food for the homeless and poor. Some infoshops provide office space for other groups or a darkroom for alternative journalists. They also have "women's space" which is an evening event held on a regular basis.

If you want to get an alternative education, check your local infoshop's calendar for free educational classes. Infoshops frequently have "Free Skools," which are the 90s version of the "free university" concept which originated in the 60s. Anybody who feels like they know something about a particular subject, be it the Spanish Civil War or practical bicycle repair, can arrange with the infoshop for a day and a spot on the calendar to do some freelance teaching. Generally classes are non-hierarchical and there are no tests, grades, or certificates. If the Skool ain't your thing, your local infoshop will have film nights or visiting lecturers. In the Atlantic region, the Atlantic Anarchist Circle has a speaker's bureau which makes arrangements for speakers to go on lecture tours. Several years ago the infoshop in Portland, Oregon arranged a speech by Noam Chomsky, which was pretty successful.

Infoshops are very valuable as meeting spaces for activist groups. It can be difficult finding a meeting space for a radical group, especially a place that feels safe and isn't at the mercy of unsympathetic hosts. Meetings at an infoshop can also serve to fertilize the activist scene, with new groups sprouting from others. For example, some people who have been attending prisoner solidarity meetings may decide to start a new group dedicated to sending prisoners free books. Folks who are doing Food Not Bombs may decide to open a food co-op or even a community garden.

Infoshops are important nodes for alternative publishing. They provide an outlet for zine authors and small publishers to sell their creations. Some shops have computers, printers, and other materials which are available for zine editors and fly-poster artists. The anarchist newspaper Slingshot has been published by the Long Haul Infoshop in Berkeley, California for many years. The folks at the A Space in Philadelphia have recently started publishing a zine called "defenestrator," which covers the local political scene.

Urgent communications are also disseminated at infoshops. News and emergency flyers can be posted on bulletin boards. The shop may have a phone tree that can be used to get the word out about a crisis, such as the police arrest of activists. If a shop has a computer and an Internet connection, it can receive or retrieve news items from activist web sites or mailing lists. It can also send out news, announcements, or emergency requests for aid.

An infoshop is usually run by a collective and volunteers; there is no paid staff. Major decisions are made during regular meetings. Since infoshops are frequently staffed by anarchists, there is a tendency to gravitate towards using consensus to decide things, although this is not always the case. Needless to say, it is impossible to find an infoshop "director" or "president." Some infoshops are membership-based, which is done to promote commitment to the project and to make sure that not just anybody off the street could come in and vote.

The movement's social base is in the punk scene. This is probably due to the fact that infoshops are the kind of community space where punks feel at home, plus they provide either a punk concert venue or a place to promote the local scene. The shops also are usually the best local outlet for zines and in some towns they may be the best place to pick up the latest 7 inch.

However, this reliance on the punk scene has its flip side. While punks infuse a lot of energy into a new infoshop, especially if they see it as being punk-oriented, punks are, by and large, transient youth. Like many young people, they have a wide range of interests and tend to move around a lot. They aren't settled members of the community so they may perceive that the project will carry on if they leave. An infoshop not grounded in the surrounding community, be it geographical or activist, will end up being just another punk clubhouse. There's nothing inherently wrong with having an infoshop that only serves a local punk subculture, it's just that the participants have to be open about that and need adopt an approach that reflects that reality.

Infoshops can also be beset by other problems. Since the organizers are usually working class or middle class whites (and typically young), they usually don't have much cash (capital) and therefore have to settle for cheap storefronts in depressed areas of a city. The end result is an infoshop organized by white youth in a community they don't live in, usually populated by minorities. The subculture that patronizes the shop, be it punk, hippy, or radical, sticks out in contrast to the surrounding neighborhood. The neighborhood residents may perceive the infoshop as a beachhead in the gentrification happening in that town. Sometimes an infoshop will be confused about its purpose or mission and may decide that it needs to "do things" for the local community. These programs may or may not be needed by the community. This isn't always the case for all infoshops -- certainly many have had successful community programs-but it can be a complicating factor. The community residents may also resent the fact that most of the infoshop activists typically don't live in the community and can always go home to someplace nicer, somewhere else in town.

The Beehive Infoshop, which used to exist in a storefront in downtown D.C., was situated in a gentrifying zone between a depressed African-American community and a predominantly white, affluent gay yuppie neighborhood. The Beehive grew out of the local D.C. punk scene, which was young and mostly white. It experienced an identity crisis where it couldn't figure out if it was serving the local punk and anarchist movements, or the geographical community in which it was located. Several members of the Beehive collective tried to talk about the gentrification issue, but the infoshop dissolved before it was adequately resolved. One of the former Beehive collective members, Brad Sigal, wrote an excellent pamphlet about his experience with Beehive and infoshops in general, titled "Demise of the Beehive Collective: lessons for the infoshop movement in North America." It should be required reading for anybody thinking about opening a new infoshop.

The main problem that infoshops face is internal dissension and factions which are a result of a project which includes members with a wide range of goals, different lifestyles, and a collective that doesn't have a clearly defined mission. If an infoshop starts with mostly members from the local punk scene and grows to include other activists, lifestyle issues may come to the fore. Some collective members may not want a weekly series of loud concerts. Others may insist on vegan food at all functions. Some may not be interested in doing outreach to the local community.

The Emma Center was an infoshop in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that opened in 1992. It closed its doors in 1995. It was started by activists who were involved in the Twin Cities Anarchist Federation (an umbrella group) and some folks involved in the Powderhorn Food Co-op. The Emma

Center was "a center for anarchist activities" and it had "books and magazines for sale, free clothes and food, free weekend child care, Women's and Queer Space nights, and frequent punk shows." (Kieran Frazier, The Blast!, 1995). The infoshop had the typical confusion about who it was trying to serve. Frazier noted that it "never made solid connections with neighborhood people, and never had a solid plan to do so." The Center also lost its base in the anarchist activist and punk communities when several of the members went off to work on other projects. The original vision of the Emma Center had been to "tighten the anarchist community in the Twin Cities, serve as an educational information tool and network, and be able to provide certain services to the surrounding communities like child care, a food shelf, soup kitchen, a bookstore, a meeting place for anarchist organizing, and a place for accessible all-age gigs and events like art shows, theater, and other types of performances." The Emma Center accomplished some of these goals, but it failed to become a long-term counter-institution, which is needed by a community.

The infoshop movement peaked around 1995-1996. There was excitement in the air because there were
several established infoshops and many new ones being opened. A "Counter-Institutions" conference was held in Detroit, mainly because of all the new interest in the infoshop concept, plus the need that existing infoshop had to network and share information with other shops. In the Fall of 1994, the movement spawned its own zine, called (Dis)Connection, which was devoted to movement networking, information exchange, creative musings, news dissemination, and advice sharing. Five issues of the zine have been produced to date. The production of each issue rotated among infoshops.

Around this time the movement also started its own organizational network, known as the Network of Anarchist Collectives. NAC was an infoshop for infoshops. It had its own email listserv and helped coordinate activities among infoshops. In August of 1996, NAC and the A-Zone in Chicago put together Active Resistance '97, which brought over 700 activists to Chicago to talk about community organizing and to protest the Democratic National Convention, which was happening only blocks away. The existence of the A-Zone infoshop and its community of supporters was instrumental in pulling off this successful conference.

In 1997 the North American infoshop movement is going through a period of self-reflection. There are some infoshops that are still going strong after at least 5 years, others are struggling, and many more have come and gone. The ones that remain in existence include Long Haul in Berkeley (opened its doors in 1979 as an activist center), A Space in Philadelphia, Lucy Parsons Center in Massachusetts, and Who's Emma in Toronto. Infoshops that have closed their doors in the last year include the 223 Center in Portland, Oregon. The Autonomous Zone infoshop in Chicago has closed its doors twice in the last year and moved several times. They are currently moving into a new location.

It's hard to tell what the future holds for the Infoshop movement in North America. The 1990s have seen some successes and some failures. Even the infoshops that existed for a short period of time had an impact on the activists that were involved. The experience gained during the last decade, be it good or bad or in between, should help activists and infoshop supporters avoid some basic mistakes and maybe clarify their vision. Infoshops can be an important resource to a community, but it's not easy creating a successful one.

http://www.infoshop.org/infoshop_page.html

* * *

Microradio Stations

FM radio is the cheapest most accessible form of mass media there is – infinitely more accessible than the internet for the overwhelming majority of humanity. However, the power of FM broadcasting as a means for democratic communication, particularly Microradio (a.k.a. Low Power FM) , is not worth much if a station does not have a community tuning in and getting involved. What follows are my suggestions for building a neighborhood radio station based on my experiences in station collectives and what I've learned from visiting other stations around the country. There is not a lot of legal talk in this essay, because my position on the "legality" of Microradio is: fuck the FCC, these are the people's airwaves and we will use them as we see fit. I hope you agree.

How's it Gonna Be?

What you have to determine when you first plan a neighborhood radio station are the following:

Who's your community?: I mean that quite literally. Answer these questions for yourself: Who lives in your neighborhood? Who would be interested in being involved in a neighborhood station? Who would be reliable? And conversely: Who would be against a Microradio station (or just doing something "illegal")? Who would be a pain in the ass?

Bring in the community at the beginning: It's not a neighborhood radio station if the neighborhood isn't involved. After you have made an effort to find the answers to the questions about your neighborhood, make a strategy based on that information, start approaching people, and form a station collective.

You might want to start with a small number of reliable and trustworthy people to set up the station, develop a plan for bringing in more of the community to do programming, and then to determine...

What level of risk is your station willing to take and how public is your station prepared to be?: Two good examples of stations that answered those questions that suited the needs of their community would be, KIND Radio in San Marcos, TX. And Radio Clandestin@ in East Los Angeles – hopefully you can use these two stations as models for determining how your station will interact with your community.

The folks at KIND Radio had two goals in founding their station: 1) make an open challenge to the FCC by defiantly operating their station as publicly as possible, with the aim of taking the FCC all the way to the Supreme Court if they came down on them, and 2) be a true service to the community by providing 100% local 24/7 programming.

What KIND did to engage the community was distribute a flyer all over town advertising the new station and inviting people in the community to sign up for open time slots – they had a full programming schedule in no time flat. KIND quickly became, in my opinion, one of the best radio stations in the country (licensed or unlicensed), with a devoted collective of programmers and a devoted community that was ready to come to the station's defense at a moment's notice.

KIND broadcasted successfully for several years, but sadly the FCC has managed to shut it down, at least temporarily, as their legal strategy did not work out the way they had hoped. But they made a truly valiant effort that is worthy of close study.

Radio Clandestin@, in East LA, took an entirely different route to establishing a station. Originally, Radio Clandestin@ (RC) was established by a small group of young Latino radicals to be a fundraising tool for buying Microradio transmitters for the Zapatistas in Mexico, but it ended up becoming a very successful station serving the Latino community in Los Angeles.

Radio Clandestin@ certainly lived up to its name. Initially, it was composed of a fairly secretive core collective that only brought new people in whom other collective members could vouch for, however, they had good reasons for operating this way. Being people of color in an oppressed community, they reasoned that if the authorities were to come to shut down the station their treatment would likely be more harsh than if they were a group of white broadcasters -- and not to mention that several members of the collective could be put in danger of being deported if they had a run in with the authorities.

In spite of this method of operation, RC gradually came to play a useful role in their neighborhood and performed a great service to the Zapatista support network operating in LA. To my knowledge, RC is still serving it's community and going strong.

Your station collective will have to determine for itself which end of the spectrum between these two stations that your station will lean towards regarding how it operates.

Practical Considerations

How long are you going to broadcast each day?: Work out a coherent schedule based on the programming hours you do have filled. How long you will broadcast each day will change over time, of course, as you gain new programmers, but whether you initially broadcast 4hrs a day or 12hrs a day, do it consistently. Which brings me to...

BE CONSISTENT!: Establish a reliable schedule for the sake of your listeners. Let me put that another way: If you want to have listeners AT ALL they need to know that your station will be on the air from time A to time B each day. If you tell people that you will be on the air from noon to midnight, Monday thru Friday, then the listener should NEVER HEAR DEAD AIR during those times of the day. If you can't do that then don't bother starting a station because no one but your friends will ever listen to it.

Breaking down responsibilities: When the station is small, your collective can just delegate various responsibilities to individual volunteers, but when the station reaches a certain size, it will be a good idea to branch off responsibilities into committees (i.e. the finance and fundraising committee, the programming committee, the technical committee, the outreach committee, etc.).

Paying the bills: A Microradio station is pretty damn cheap in itself. The only crucial expenses you'll likely have to worry about are rent (if you rent the space your station resides at) and putting money aside for your station's legal fund. Most successful stations can get by pretty well by having their collective members pay monthly dues (like $5 to $10 per month – it would also be a good idea to implement a sliding scale for dues paying).

As for buying new equipment, that's not a regular expense. You can throw fundraisers to raise equipment money and even openly pitch for donations on the air (though, I wouldn't try pitching until your station is established in the community). You can also ask for direct donations of the actual items your station needs. Don't underestimate the community, if they love you, they'll come through for you in ways you'll never expect.

I think that covers the essentials for establishing a successful and effective neighborhood radio station. Fight the power and have fun.

--Shawn Ewald

* * *

Confronting the FCC and Defending Your Micropower Station From Being Shut Down

Everything is going great with your micropower station, and then comes that knock on the door - an FCC agent or two demanding to inspect your station. What do you do ? In response to this Free Radio Berkeley IRATE has prepared this legal defense packet to answer that question and prepare you for that dreaded knock. A number of stations have merely folded their tent and gone silent in response to the first visit or letter from the FCC. This is a result of folks not knowing their rights and responding from a position of fear not strength. When you know your rights, prepare ahead of time, and respond in a proactive manner you will assure the continued operation of your station for months if not years after the first FCC visit.

First, the FCC will does not do very well when it comes to public relations. Its agents are not trained to deal with the media. Anything you can do to put them in the media spotlight will usually be to your advantage. Every time the FCC makes a move against your station send a press release to the media. In this release succinctly state your case and frame it as a First Amendment issue. Highlight the ever increasing concentration of media resources into fewer and fewer hands and how this prevents all but the wealthy and powerful from having a voice.

Be certain that everyone associated with the station knows their rights and won’t freak out at the presence of the FCC. Included in this packet is “What to do when the FCC Knocks”. Make copies of this for everyone to read and keep. Post it in your studio. Before you even begin broadcasting find an attorney who will be on call if you need legal assistance. No one should use their real name on the air or identify themselves to the FCC. Without any legal names it is much more difficult for the FCC to proceed legally. Usually the course of events is as follows. You will receive a letter from the FCC taking notice of your operation.

Sometimes the letter will be presented as part of their visit to your station. This letter will state that if your persist in unlicensed operations you will be subject to possible fines or jail. In order to either collect a fine or begin criminal proceedings the FCC has to present their case to a Federal court. Despite fines being assessed against a number of people they have yet to go to court in order to collect the fines since this would open their process to possible Constitutional scrutiny. Likewise for the criminal proceedings as well. So far there have only been only one or two instances of actual criminal prosecution.

It is important to defend your station in a militant manner. Included in this packet is the “Pledge of Resistance Form”. As a Free Speech voice your station should be serving the community in such a manner that your listeners feel it is a valuable resource worth defending. Circulate this pledge and get as many signers as possible. When you have gotten at least 100-200 signers send out a press release stating that x number of people have agreed to physically defend the station, include a copy of the form. This will put the FCC on notice that they will not have easy job. Building a sense of solidarity and creating a strong alliance with your community is very important. Threats and intimidation are the FCC’s main means of shutting down stations.

If those tactics fail they may obtain a seizure order from a Federal judge. This is done in a secret hearing without any opposing counsel representing your station being present. With such an order the FCC can literally bust down the door if necessary with Federal Marshals and take your equipment. In order to counter that threat the National Lawyers Guild Committee on Democratic Communications has crafted the legal documents that will be required by your attorney to file suit against the FCC in an attempt to prevent the possible seizure of your equipment. This legal action challenges the Constitutionality of the FCC's seizure authority. Once you receive your first letter from the FCC you have legal standing to file suit in Federal District Court. It is important that as many micropower stations as possible do this.

First, if accepted by the court, it will take months and months for the wheels of justice to turn - it took the FCC 4 years to finally get an injunction against Free Radio Berkeley. Secondly, it will tie up the legal resources of the FCC which is a rather small agency which must take up the time of an attorney from the local Federal Attorneys office every time they engage in a new legal case. Imagine the consequences from the FCC having to respond to dozens of these suits being filed.

Winning your suit knocks out the immediate seizure authority and forces the FCC to go through a series of administrative procedures before any further legal action can be undertaken. Even not winning buys months of time. And, of course, you can appeal your case to the Federal Appeals Court adding many more months to the process. Taken as a whole strategy these steps will greatly increase not only the survivability of your station but will also do much to further strengthen the micropower broadcasting movement. For further information check the following web sites:

http://www.freeradio.org – http://www.nlgcdc.org – http://www.radio4all.org – http://www.368hayes.com.

Contact Free Radio Berkeley IRATE (International Radio Action Training Education) directly if you any have any questions: frbspd@crl.com or 510-549-0732. Stephen Dunifer - Free Radio Berkeley IRATE, 1442 A Walnut St., PMB 406, Berkeley, CA 94709

* * *

What To Do when the FCC Knocks On Your Door

Produced by the Committee on Democratic Communications — A National Committee of the National Lawyers Guild

NOTE: The following discussion assumes that you are not a licensed broadcaster.

Q) If FCC agents knock on my door and say they want to talk with me, do I have to answer their questions?

A: No. You have a right to say that you want a lawyer present when and if you speak with them, and that if they will give you their names, you will be back in touch with them. Unless you have been licensed to broadcast, the FCC has no right to "inspect" your home.

Q) If they say they have a right to enter my house without a warrant to see if I have broadcasting equipment, do I have to let them in?

A: No. Under Section 303(n) of Title 47 U.S.C., the FCC has a right to inspect any transmitting devices that must be licensed under the Act. Nonetheless, they must have permission to enter your home, or some other basis for entering beyond their mere supervisorial powers. With proper notice, they do have a right to inspect your communications devices. If they have given you notice of a pending investigation, contact a lawyer immediately.

Q) If they have evidence that I am “illegally” broadcasting from my home, can they enter anyway, even without a warrant or without my permission?

A: They will have to go to court to obtain a warrant to enter your home. But, if they have probable cause to believe you are currently engaging in illegal activities of any sort, they, with the assistance of the local police, can enter your home without a warrant to prevent those activities from continuing. Basically, they need either a warrant, or probable cause to believe a crime is going on at the time they are entering your home.

Q) If I do not cooperate with their investigation, and they threaten to arrest me, or have me arrested, should I cooperate with them?

A: If they have a legal basis for arresting you, it is very likely that they will prosecute you regardless of what you say. Therefore, what you say will only assist them in making a stronger case against you. Do not speak to them without a lawyer there.

Q) If they have an arrest or a search warrant, should I let them in my house?

A: Yes. Give them your name and address, and tell them that you want to have your lawyer contacted immediately before you answer any more questions. If you are arrested, you have a right to make several telephone calls within 3 hours of booking.

Q) Other than an FCC fine for engaging in illegal transmissions, what other risks do I take in engaging in micro-radio broadcasts.

A: Section 501 of the Act provides that violations of the Act can result in the imposition of a $10,000 fine or by imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or both. A second conviction results in a potentially longer sentence. If you are prosecuted under this section of the Act, and you are indigent (unable to hire an attorney), the court will have to appoint one for you.

Q) Are there any other penalties that can be imposed upon me for "illegal broadcasts."

A: Under Section 510 of the Act, the FCC can attempt to have your communicating equipment seized and forfeited for violation of the requirements set forth in the Act. Once again, if they attempt to do this, you will be given notice of action against you, and have an opportunity to appear in court to fight the FCC's proposed action. Realize, though, that they will try to keep your equipment and any other property they can justify retaining until the proceedings are completed. You have a right to seek return of your property from the court at any time.

Q) If the FCC agents ask me if I knew I was engaged in illegal activities, should I deny any knowledge of FCC laws or any illegal activities?

A: No. You will have plenty of time to answer their accusations after you have spoken with an attorney. It is a separate crime to lie to law enforcement officials about material facts. Remain silent.

Q) If I am considering broadcasting over micro-radio, is there anything I can do ahead of time to minimize the likelihood of prosecution?

A: Yes. Speak with an attorney before you are approached by law enforcement to discuss the different aspects of FCC law. Arrange ahead of time for someone to represent you when and if the situation arises, so that you will already have prepared a strategy of defense.

Q) What can I do if the FCC agents try to harass me by going to my landlord, or some other source to apply pressure on me?

A: So long as there is no proof that you have violated the law, you cannot be prosecuted or evicted. If there is evidence of misconduct, you might have to defend yourself in court. Depending upon what the FCC said or did, you might be able to raise a defense involving selective prosecution or other equivalent argument. If the conduct of the agents is clearly harassment, rather than a proper investigation, you can file a complaint with the F.C.C. or possibly a civil action against them.

Q) If I want to legally pursue FCC licensing for a new FM station, what should I do?

A: It isn’t the purpose of this Q and A sheet to advocate or discourage non-licensed broadcast operations. A person cited by the FCC for illegal broadcasting will find it virtually impossible to later obtain permission to get a license.

If you want to pursue the licensing procedure, see the procedures set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 47, Part 73. The application form (Form # 301 A) is extremely complicated, and requires a filing fee of $2,030.00. If you want to contact the FCC directly, call them at their Consumer Assistance and Small Business Division, Room 254, 1919 N St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20554, tel (202) 632-7260. Don’t bother to try this without significant financial backing.

* * *

Mutual Aid Projects

What is a Mutual Aid Project?

Mutual Aid Projects can take many forms; from a parent organized child-minding cooperative, to a community kitchen, to a "free bin" at the local community center, to a community health insurance fund. The point of a mutual aid project is that it be mutually beneficial for everyone involved. Here are some examples.

Mutual Aid Societies

What is a Mutual Aid Society?

Mutual Aid Societies are typically clubs or associations that are created for the purpose of providing social and economic services and insurance for their membership through mutual aid (as opposed to capitalist enterprise or reliance on the government). Mutual Aid Societies have taken many forms in the past – some revolutionary in purpose, some merely practical or, at best, reformist. The idea of mutual aid societies dates back to the middle ages, but the still existing examples of mutual aid societies were born in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The simplest kind of mutual aid societies were "Community Chests", which were informal, self-organized banks or "money pots", in which the money was either saved for emergencies and long-term plans or made available for community members to take no-interest loans from.

Mainstream clubs like the Oddfellows, the Moose, or the Woodmen were originally founded as Mutual Aid Societies, which provided their members with services including employment information, sick benefits, and burial funds, and built orphanages and hospitals. But these clubs were largely centrist to reactionary in their politics and usually had a religious influence. In the end, with the exception of clubs like the Woodmen, these organizations ended up morphing into merely philanthropic clubs.

Societies that were for the mutual aid of specific ethnic groups, like the Ancient Order of Hibernians (Irish), and La Liga Protectora Latina (Chicano/Latino), often had more overtly leftist politics and engaged in activism – supporting labor organizing and providing strike support, fighting discrimination and racism against their respective ethnic groups -- as well as providing many of the benefits of mainstream mutual aid societies. One of the more notable examples of the leftist ethnic mutual aid societies would be the large network of Latino mutual aid societies in Ybor City in Tampa, Florida that provided the same services as groups like the Hibernians as well as raising funds and supplies for the Spanish revolution.

Furthermore, radical unions like the Western Federation of Miners also provided many of the benefits and social insurance services that mutual aid societies offered. Not to mention that much of revolutionary Spain's economy was also managed by more advanced versions of the mutual aid societies described above.

As these examples illustrate, mutual aid societies are not inherently revolutionary, but the potential for mutual aid societies to provide a part of the infrastructure for a decentralized and self-sufficient anarchist economy are quite evident, and maintaining the revolutionary focus of such organizations is not really that different from maintaining the revolutionary focus of a radical labor union (since labor unions are also not inherently revolutionary themselves, as history has shown).

One thing that mutual aid societies provide for the building of an anti-capitalist, anti-authoritarian movement is services that immediately address the economic and social problems that poor and working-class people face.

Ithaca Health Fund
Locally Controlled Non-profit Mutual Health Security

We've created a local non-profit fund to pool our money to reduce our health costs, to support each other, and to make healthy living easier.

We're building our own safety net, much as the Amish do. Their communities have created medical "assurance plans." Some Amish gather quarterly to total their community's doctor and hospital bills, where they calculate each family's contributions according to ability to pay.

The U.S. health "industry" is the nation's largest: over $1 trillion ($1 million million) yearly, or 14% of GDP, is fed to a system more organized for profitability than public need. Medical costs have been driven beyond our reach by medical specialization and technology, by the greed of insurance and drug companies, by bureaucratization, and by lawsuits that rise from consumer frustration.

Therefore our Fund proceeds systematically to make preventive and innovative health care more affordable, and to recapture health insurance premiums for local health purposes. The Fund is governed by a local board of directors (representing different health sectors) elected by Fund members. They adjust Health Fund policies to maximize immediate member benefits, while retaining enough reserves to build nonprofit clinics.

Compensation through the Ithaca Health Fund takes two forms.

First, discounts for services and goods: especially those services least covered by conventional insurers but which are preferred by area residents. And we're emphasizing preventive care, to reduce our need for costly acute care.

With a properly balanced discount system, benefitting all participants in a mutually satisfying way, we create general local price reductions and thus increase discretionary income. Those health providers who give discounts to Health Fund members themselves receive discounts from an additional list of support businesses.

Secondly, payment for acute care: ambulance rides and broken bones during the first year, then expanding gradually to cover emergency stitches, burns, appendectomies, and so on. We’re able to do this as we explore the supply and demand for payments. Expanding year by year with the good will of the community, the fund holds not only membership fees, but tax-deductible donations and bequests.

The plan moreover includes flexible payment options — not merely dollars, but also community service, home visit credits, barter and HOURS. These are more fully described on the web site.

http://www.ithacahealth.org/

* * *

Child-minding Co-ops

If you have small children, you know how difficult it can be to find, and pay for a baby-sitter. Many families have found a solution to their baby-sitting woes in child-minding co-ops.

In these co-ops, families care for each other's children both in their own homes and in the homes of the children, during the day, evening, or overnight. Most co-ops keep track of baby-sitting hours on a list of debits and credits; one local group keeps track by exchanging poker chips. Hours are not only determined by the clock, but by tardiness, the number of children, lateness of returning, and other considerations.

Most co-ops serve a small area, one that allows for participants to walk between each others homes. A co-op works best with fifteen to twenty families - enough to spread the baby-sitting around. Participants are usually found by talking to friends. This is preferable to posting "vacancies" since most people feel happier leaving their children with "friends of friends".

A selection committee usually visits a candidate's home to look at general safety, neatness, the level of child-proofing, and to see whether people smoke inside, and who might be coming and going. On being accepted, candidates pay a small start-up fee, and register their name with the co-op's secretary (a position rotated on a monthly or quarterly basis). The secretary is the person who takes "orders" for baby-sitting, usually with a minimum 24 hours notice. Baby-sitters are sought on the basis of their availability, and the balance on their baby-sitting account.

The Marpole Oakridge Co-op (in Vancouver, B.C.) meets every two months for a potluck, an occasion to socialize as well as deal with any concerns. Little Mountain Co-op (in Vancouver, B.C.) uses a similar opportunity to introduce new candidates to their group. It holds a social event three times a year for both kids and parents. These events bring a sense of community to a sometimes isolated group of parents.

Some co-ops have been in operation for as long as 20 years. The longevity of the co-op depends largely on its ease of administration, and the ability to find new families as others outgrow its services. For more information contact your local neighborhood house, or family place.

[From "The Citizen's Handbook" http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/2_01_child_mind.html]

* * *

How to Start a Community Kitchen

Community kitchens give people the opportunity to get together to share the cost, planning and preparation of healthy meals. At present there are about 42 community kitchens in Vancouver. Members usually meet twice a month, once to plan four or five entrées and to organize the purchase of food, and once to prepare the meals. Since a licensed kitchen is not required, groups meet in homes as well as church basements, Neighborhood Houses and community centers.

You've heard about community kitchens (CK) and are interested in getting involved with a kitchen in your neighborhood. Where do you go from there?

Basic Steps for Starting a Community Kitchen

1. Create a small poster/flyer

Poster/flyer should briefly describe a community kitchen and encourage interested participants. Neighborhood houses, community centers and local gathering places are good spots to display your poster. Some people even advertise in local community papers to attract members. Don't forget to include your name and contact number! Word of mouth is also an effective form of advertising. Tell all your friends and acquaintances about your interest in forming a community kitchen. Before long you'll have enough cooks to get started!

2. Call a First Meeting

Once you have four or five interested people, call your first meeting. Host it in your home or meet at a public place in the community. Most community centers or neighborhood houses will accommodate these types of meetings at no cost. You may want to present the community facility with general information such as the single page - What is a community kitchen . This will help them understand what your group is trying to achieve and who knows, they may even be interested in playing a supportive role even after the initial meeting. If you live in an area that has a CK coordinator, invite him or her to your first meeting. Alternatively, you could invite someone from an already existing kitchen. It's always helpful to have someone with direct CK experience that will help your group discuss the more challenging issues surrounding communal cooking.

3. The First Meeting – Guidelines

The first meeting allows the group to make decisions about their planned time together in a community kitchen. It is suggested to use the checklist as a general agenda to guide your group through this important meeting. The checklist is a good tool to print out and give to each participant so you can go through it as a group. It is also recommended that someone from the group volunteer to record the decisions made and the questions that will require further discussion. Copies of these minutes should be made available to all members of the group.

After this first meeting there will have been tasks delegated that would include securing a place to cook. In Vancouver there are many different hosts of Community Kitchens. The following list may give you some ideas on who to approach in your community when you are looking for a kitchen site. All but two of the community kitchens running in Vancouver are able to use the kitchen facility free of charge. Some of the sites that host community kitchens are:

community centers
neighborhood houses
church kitchens
apartment or co-op common kitchen areas
high school home economics rooms
single room occupancy hotel common kitchen areas

4.The Second Meeting - Recipe Selection and Groceries

Recipe selection can be done a week in advance, a month in advance or the day before cooking. After a while some groups feel comfortable enough to choose recipes for the next cooking during the present cooking. What is important in recipe selection is that everyone in the group brings forth recipes that meet the group's needs and desires that were discussed and agreed upon in the first meeting. Encourage group members to bring favorite recipes, recipe books, grocery store flyers and other relevant information on food sales or seasonal foods that could be included. Remember that cost and seasonal availability will work hand in hand with each other. Keep in mind the length of time each recipe takes to prepare and cook or bake. Make sure that you don't overbook the stove top or oven space.

Grocery Money:

The group will need to make a decision on how they want to handle the finances. It may take a few cookings to find the payment method that works the best for your group.

Some groups working within a budget will agree to bring their set amount of grocery money each time they recipe plan. It will then be handed over in good faith to the grocery shopper(s). There may be someone in your group who will be unable to contribute any money at all. In this case, perhaps the participant can contribute something else towards the cooking group. Anything from garden produce to frozen meat to child minding could be welcomed as participant contribution. Other groups handle the finances with a reimbursement method. Whether these groups have a per person or per portion budget in mind, they have 2 or 3 people buying all of the groceries. The cost is divided up once they meet to cook and all shoppers are reimbursed.

The Greater Vancouver Food Bank Society wholeheartedly supports community kitchens. Presently they support over 35% of the kitchens running in Vancouver. If your kitchen feels in need of food support, and you live in the Vancouver, Burnaby or New Westminister area, call the Food Bank's Distribution Manager at 876-3601 for more details. If you live elsewhere and you have a food bank that serves your area, give them a call and speak to them about supporting your community kitchen initiative.

Other kitchens have received donated food support from local retail or wholesale food distributors. These donations reduce the food costs to an amount that is affordable to the group.

5. The Shopping

Once your group has selected the four or five recipes that will be used for the next cooking session, you have to decide whether you need to double or triple the recipes. This would depend on how many portions each person requires. Once this is determined you are ready to organize the shopping list and choose the shoppers. There are different ways groups deal with this procedure. Here are a couple of examples that have worked well for kitchens:

a. Create one master list of ingredients needed for all of the recipes. Divide the list up so each person in the group buys a portion or have a few individuals take turns buying all the ingredients. The grocery list portions may be divided by food group to make it easier.

b. Create one list per recipe. Keep in mind there will be overlap with ingredients needed. Designate one shopper to be responsible for the ingredients for one or two recipes. Most groups either have one or two designated shoppers. Many groups have participants take turns to do the shopping. Whatever the case may be, shopping should be done as close to the cooking time as possible.

Storage of perishable items is often an issue which makes shopping close to cooking time important. Please be sure that the ingredients for your community kitchen recipes are being stored safely and at the appropriate temperature (refrigerated if necessary) after their purchase. You may even find some ingredients are available from someone's garden or cupboard.

Save all your receipts to make life easier when it comes time to divide the cost of food or just to keep a general accounting of cost per portion etc.

6. The Cooking

Most groups cook together every week, every three weeks or once a month. Since cooking together means menu planning and shopping, groups who are making five meals to bring home often find it too much to cook once a week. They would rather cook a large amount of meals and cook less often. The majority of groups who cook once a week are sharing a fabulous meal together at that time. Little, if any, cooked meals are taken home.

Regardless of how many meals your group is cooking at any given time, meal preparation and sharing is a rewarding group activity.

Your group is gathered in the kitchen and ready to go. Establishing a few basic steps will not only increase the group's effectiveness and success rate but will also increase the overall level of knowledge and skill within your kitchen.

1. Get your group to read the recipes out loud. This might seem obvious but many people are in such a rush to get their hands dirty that they never actually go over what they are about to do. Familiarizing the entire group with each recipe will allow you to clear up any problems ahead of time. How many times have you poured the cake batter into the pan but forgot to turn on the oven?

2. Divide up the tasks. Determine who will be working on what recipe.

3. Prepare work stations. Gather all the ingredients, utensils and cooking/baking equipment that will be needed for each recipe and set up an area for which to work. For example, if you have a recipe that requires use of the stove, perhaps it might be convenient for that person to work on the counter space right next to it. Do you have all the ingredients?

4. Lastly, each participant should be urged to read over the recipe again in order to have the information fresh in their minds. Don your aprons, wash your hands and let the cooking begin!

[From "How to Start a Community Kitchen" http://www.communitykitchens.ca/steps.htm]

* * *

Free Bins
What's a Free Bin?

A free bin is nothing more than a large container (like a chest or a trash can) were people put old clothes and other items that they don't need to make them available for others who do. If you want something, dig around, if you want to leave something, drop it in. Free bins are a really simple thing that many infoshops and community centers make available to the community. It's so simple an idea, in fact, that it sometimes doesn't occur to people running spaces for the community.

If your free bin becomes a success, you might want to consider expanding to into a free closet or even a free room.

* * *

Tenant's Unions

Before You Begin

Yet again:

- you have no heat and hot water.
- the building's front door lock is broken, and a neighbor was mugged in the lobby.
- you asked the owner to repair the leak in your kitchen, but no one was sent.

If you've been faced with any of these situations or ones similar to them on an ongoing basis, has your first impulse been "I have to move"? But then, you look through the real estate section of the newspaper and realize that there is little else that you can afford. What are your alternatives at this point? Either live with no hot water (or muggings, or a leak in the kitchen) OR consider organizing a tenants' association.

Before putting your thoughts into action, ask yourself if you are willing to invest some time and energy to improve your living conditions. Also, ask yourself if you are willing to abide by the decisions of the group (majority of the members of the tenants' association) in the actions and strategies that could be implemented. If your answers are, "Yes," read on.

Talk to Your Neighbors

Talk to the people who live in your building - as you see them by the mailboxes, in the hallway, or by knocking on doors. Ask them if they have had similar problems as you have experienced and if they, also, have been unsuccessful in getting a positive response from the owner. Ask your neighbors if they believe the conditions in the building need to be improved and find out if they are interested in meeting with the other tenants of the building to discuss what can be done.

Let people know that the common problems of the building do not have to continue and that if the tenants are willing to work together as a group they can be successful in getting the building owner to improve services. Ask them when is the best time for them to attend such a tenants' meeting.

These preliminary discussions with your neighbors will help you determine whether or not the tenants feel
strongly enough about the problems to want to mobilize, or whether they just want to 'complain' (and only to each other). Your conversations should also help you get a sense as to whether people are "afraid" to get involved. If this seems to be the case, you can quote them the section of the Real Property Law that guarantees tenants the right to organize.

The Right to Organize a Tenants Association is Guaranteed by Law:

1. No landlord shall interfere with the right of a tenant to form, join or participate in the lawful activities of any group, committee or other organization formed to protect the rights of tenants; nor shall any landlord harass, punish, penalize, diminish, or withhold any right, benefit or privilege of a tenant under his tenancy for exercising such right.

2. Tenants' groups, committees or other tenants' associations shall have the right to meet in any location on the premises which is devoted to the common use of all

tenants in a peaceful manner, at reasonable hours, and without obstructing access to the premises or facilities. No landlord shall deny such right.

REAL PROPERTY LAW - Article 7, Section 230
Ref: McKinney's Consolidated Laws of New York Annotated,
Book 49, Real Property Law; Cumulative Annual Pocket Part

(research the laws in your state regarding the right to organize a tenant's union)

If a group of tenants agree to participate, then....

Plan a Meeting:

Who?

If a few tenants in the building were involved in the initial thoughts and discussions of organizing, or, if during your preliminary "fact finding mission" with your neighbors a few indicated active interest, decide among this beginning group who will facilitate the first meeting. Whoever facilitates this meeting does not automatically become the head of the association, of course. Also, some of the tasks outlined in this section can be delegated to others in this group.

When?

Depending on the severity of the issue, try to hold the meeting as quickly as possible. If most of the people in your building work during the day, plan on having the meeting in the evening, after dinner. Sunday afternoons may also be a convenient time for the tenants.

Where?

The meeting can be held in someone's apartment, or in any public area of the building. If you cannot or choose not to meet in the building itself, see if a nearby church, synagogue or school will allow your group to meet there. (You may have to give a donation)

How?

Make up a FLIER (handwritten notice is fine) to let all tenants in the building know about the meeting. Include on the flier the PURPOSE of the meeting (i.e. to do something about the i.e. lack of heat/hot water), the DATE, the TIME and the LOCATION. If the meeting will be in the lobby, you can include that people can bring their own chairs.

POST the flier in key places around the building - in the vestibule, elevator, laundry room, by the mailboxes, etc. Don't be surprised if the fliers 'mysteriously' disappear shortly after you have posted them, so to safeguard against this, and if you can afford to duplicate enough meeting notices, you should also leaflet under doors throughout the building, in addition, immediately prior to the meeting it may be helpful if some tenants knock on doors to remind people to attend the meeting.

Materials

Prepare a SIGN-IN sheet for the first meeting, including on it the date of the meeting, and columns for tenants to include their name, apartment, day and evening telephone numbers. On the top of this sheet, ask people to print this information.

Bring paper and pens to the meeting. If someone from the beginning group is willing to take minutes of the meeting, make such arrangements in advance. If not, be prepared to ask for a volunteer from those who attend the meeting to take minutes.

At the First Meeting:

Have the sign-in sheet at the door.

Introductions

Whoever is selected or volunteers to facilitate the first meeting should give his/her name and apartment number. Explain how and why the meeting was called, and who the preliminary group included.

Explain the importance of record keeping.

It is important, also, that everyone understands that minutes of all meetings need to be taken, both to keep accurate records for the association as well as to be distributed to all tenants whether or not they are able to attend all the meetings.

Take minutes of the meeting

If no arrangements were made in advance for someone to take minutes of this meeting, the facilitator should ask for a volunteer. If there is some hesitation, let people know that whoever volunteers will not be asked to take minutes at every meeting and that this task can (and should) be rotated.

General Introductions

Depending on the size of the group, ask everyone at the meeting to introduce him/herself. If you live in a large building and most tenants have come to this meeting, ask, by a show of hands, how many representatives there are from each floor.

Get a consensus from the tenants of the BUILDING-WIDE problems

Ask the tenants what they see as problems in the building. If the group has come together because of a crisis, i.e. no heat/hot water for "x" amount of time, clearly that is your starting off point; however, this does not mean that it is the only issue that the group could seek to resolve. Your group can develop short-term and long-term goals.

If no one offers other building-wide issues, ask questions to elicit responses. Other building-wide issues that the group may consider addressing are:

General Maintenance and Repairs

What experiences have tenants had when they have needed repairs in their apartments? Does the owner, on a general basis, refuse (or take an inordinate amount of time) to send a repair person?

Garbage collection

Does the building have sufficient garbage cans given the number of apartments in the building?

General cleanliness of the building

Does the building have a superintendent? Is he/she accessible? Does the superintendent clean the building on a regular basis?

Extermination

Is there a problem with roaches and/or rodents? Does the building have regular extermination services? Is it at a time that is convenient for the tenants?

Security

Is the building's front door adequately and securely locked? Is there proper lighting outside the building, in the vestibule, In the hallways, in the basement, in the back alley, in the stairwells, etc.
Is the roof door secured? If there is an elevator, does it have a mirror giving tenants visual access to its blind corner before people enter?

Keep the focus on building-wide problems

Try not to get caught up in a discussion of one tenant's problem(s). If someone monopolizes the discussion about the leak in their ceiling that they have had for two years, ask if other people have similar problems. If they do, focus the discussion on the GENERAL LACK OF REPAIRS. If other tenants don't have similar problems, tell the tenant you will discuss their specific problem after the meeting.

Prioritize the building-wide problems

Which problems are most important and therefore should be dealt with first? Again, if the group has come together because of a crisis, that is your main priority, however, the other building-wide problems should be listed in order of their importance to the majority of the tenants present at the meeting.

Discuss how tenants have dealt with complaints in the past

Who do tenants notify when they have a complaint? Do the tenants know who owns the building? Have the tenants dealt primarily with the superintendent? with a managing agent? with whom?

Ask tenants what their experiences have been in the past in dealing with the building owner (or their regular contact person)? Have such contacts been by telephone, or do tenants write? Is there a difference in the response depending on whether it is in writing or verbally? If tenants have written, do they copies of these letters?

Decide whether or not to work together

Before you discuss possible strategies, and before you decide which best suits your building's needs, you will need to decide how your building will implement the strategies. Is it the general consensus of the tenants that working together as a group will be more effective than working individually?

Take a VOTE on whether to form a tenants' association. If the group votes in favor of having a tenants' association, you are ready to begin working together as a group.

Structuring Your Tenants' Association

There is no "perfect" or "best" way to structure a tenants' association. Basically, it should be structured in a way that will best enable the group to set policies and make decisions, and that will involve as many of the tenants as possible in implementing the strategies the group decides to undertake. As importantly, the structure should enhance the group's ability to carry out the day-to-day tasks needed to improve the building's conditions.

On-Going Tasks:

No matter what the issue, and no matter what strategies your association decides to implement, certain tasks will need to be carried out to keep the association functioning smoothly and effectively. Please note that it is not necessary to have a separate individual or a separate committee for each of the tasks outlined below. The way your association addresses these tasks depends on the group's resources. Just keep in mind that people have different amounts of time, so consider setting up systems whereby the following tasks can be shared and/or rotated among several tenants.

Research

Information will need to be gathered on the housing laws, regulations, tenants' rights and responsibilities specifically related to your building's problems. Also, many associations find it helpful to find out what other groups with similar problems have done to resolve them.

Regular Communication among tenants

Sometimes, tenants don't become involved (or stop their involvement) with the association because they may not fully understand (or trust) the purpose or the strategy of the group. If the association keeps everyone informed, through every step, it is likely that the tenants will increase their participation. Develop a system that will let all tenants know what is happening and why. In small buildings, word of mouth may be enough. In larger buildings, communication may be in writing, i.e. copies of minutes to all tenants, a short summary of developments, a one-page newsletter. The method you choose will depend on the size of the building and resources on hand.

Tenants will also need to know who to contact within the association about specific things that have happened to them, i.e. receipt of a dispossess notice, return of a rent check, etc.

Representing each floor

One (or more) person from each floor can be elected "floor delegate" to be responsible for distributing all association information to each apartment on his/her floor, collecting needed data from each tenant and, in general, being the first "contact" for any questions tenants on their floor may have.

Scheduling Meetings

The association will need to schedule regular meetings to discuss developments and strategies and to decide on what actions to take.

Meeting Notices

For each meeting held, notices will need to be distributed to all tenants and posted throughout the building. Find out who can take on this responsibility. All that is needed is someone who can either print clearly, or who has access to a typewriter [or computer].

Find out if someone (or several people) in the association can duplicate the fliers at work. If not, you will need to pay for duplication at a local stationery store which also means that you will need, at some point, to collect dues or contributions from the tenants.

Correspondence

The association will need to write to the building owner, to appropriate government agencies, to elected officials, to local community organizations, etc.

Record keeping

The association will need to keep accurate and complete files of all activities initiated by the group, including minutes of meetings. copies of newsletters, copies of all correspondence, records of dates and times (i.e. With no heat/hot water), copies of complaint forms that are filed by the tenants as a group or individually, etc.

Managing Finances

The association may incur group expenses such as postage, duplicating etc., in the course of their efforts.

Depending on the problems and the owner's response to the tenants' demands, the association may have to go to court which can entail legal fees. The association will have to decide how to pay for such expenses, either by dues, contributions, fund-raisers, etc.

If the association decides to collect dues, keep in mind that not all tenants have the same financial capabilities. Therefore, the amount of dues should be based on a real assessment of the association's expenses. You do not have to decide on dues at your first meeting and, in fact, many associations simply ask for contributions as expenses come up.

NEVER collect money from tenants unless the tenants understand and agree to its use. Give expense reports at meetings, and keep records and receipts.

Should your association find that it needs to open a bank account to handle the group's finances, it may be opened in the name of the tenants' association, i.e. 331 East 70 Street Tenants' Association. To open the account, a bank will require the social security number of someone from the association. If the account is non-interest bearing, i.e. a regular checking account, the person whose number is used will not be required to pay income tax on it. It is recommended that the signatures of at least two people be required to make withdrawals and sign checks.

Forming a Tenant's Committee

A committee composed of the floor delegates should be formed. Those serving on a committee have "equal powers" and act as the collective leadership of the group. They should fully understand that they represent and are accountable to the full membership as well as recallable by the people on the floor they represent.

Purpose of the Tenant's Committee

The committee helps to facilitate the association in setting policies, defining goals and in making decisions. On a regular basis, the committee members should examine whether or not they are adequately representing the group by asking themselves the following questions: Are the association members involved in the decision making of the group? Do the association members understand and agree with the goals of the group? Do they understand the strategies being discussed? Are these strategies realistic given the needs and resources of the group? Are the strategies over-ambitious, i.e. they need 100 people to carry them out, but there are only 17 members?

As importantly, the tenant's committee coordinates and delegates the day-to-day tasks needed to run the association, such as scheduling, maintaining records, drafting letters, etc.

Note To Members of the Association

A member has the right and the responsibility to question and, if necessary, challenge what the tenant's committee is saying and doing, especially if it is contrary to the strategies or goals decided upon by the group, or if the members are not a part of deciding what the group will do. And members should be ready, if necessary, to recall their floor delegate if they are not fully serving their role as the representative of the floor's collective will.

[From "Tenant Organizing Manual" by Maria Mottola and Paulette Geanacopoulos http://www.tenant.net/Organize/Lenox/lh-1.html with modifications by the editor.]

Strategies to Improve the Conditions of your Building

We've discussed how to organize your neighbors to address the building-wide problems as a group and how to maintain a unified and cohesive association. Once you have decided how you will be working together, the next stage is to plan the specific actions your group will take and in what sequence. This chapter outlines a progressive course of action from finding out who owns your building, to going on rent-strike, how far your association will need to go will depend on your owner's response to your group's demands as well as how far the tenants in your association are willing to go. Please note that some of the steps can be conducted concurrently with others that are outlined below.

Depending on the severity of the building's problems, your association may decide to begin with aggressive actions. Keep in mind that regardless of the strategies you choose, documentation of building conditions and proof that the owner knows about the problems will strengthen your case in court and/or at administrative hearings.

Whatever course of action your association decides to take, make sure that you are clear about what it is that you want to accomplish and as importantly, that you have the resources needed to achieve these goals.

Step One: Find Out Who Owns The Building

To effectively address building problems, tenants should deal directly with the building owner. If you do not know who owns your building there are two places to find out:

1. Building owners must register with the City. Tenants must go, in person, and ask to see the Multiple Dwelling Registration card for their building.

2.Or, you can ask to see a copy of the deed for the building at the City Register.

Step Two: Put Your Complaints In Writing

Write the owner, by petition or in letter form, documenting the conditions of the building. Send it by certified mail, return receipt requested. Keep a copy for the association's files.

Whatever other steps your group decides to take, this step is critical so that the owner cannot say s/he did not "know" of the problems, and because all authorities you may go to in future actions will request proof that YOU notified the owner of the conditions.

Be specific in documenting the conditions of the building. In cases of lack of service, i.e. heat/hot water, include the tenants' records of the dates, time, etc. when your building lacked such services and how long such conditions have existed. Include what tenants have done in the past to notify the owner (or super or managing agent) and what the owner's response was.

Let the owner know what you want done and by when. Give the name and telephone number of one or two tenant representatives that the owner can contact. If your group writes the owner by letter rather than petition, you can identify the signers of the letter the group's representatives, such as "For the Tenants' Association."

Send copies of your letter/petition to community agencies in the neighborhood, and to elected officials. Make sure to "cc" such organizations at the bottom of your letter.

Step Three: Negotiate With Your Owner

In negotiations, disputing parties seek to reach a mutually satisfactory and voluntary settlement to their differences. Through face-to-face negotiations, the tenants' association meets directly with the owner, sometimes for the first time, presenting its demands and jointly developing a timetable for repairs.

Negotiating with a building owner shows that the group, in good faith, gave the owner the opportunity to respond to the issues at hand. If the association needs to take more aggressive actions in the future, records of the negotiation attempts can provide effective documentation in housing court or at administrative hearings.

Decide when and where to meet the owner

Select two or three dates and times from which the owner can choose a convenient time to meet. Try to select times that will enable your group and the owner to meet without interruptions, times that are not likely to be followed by other appointments so that no one is looking at their watches during the session.

Decide where you wish to meet with the owner.

Some owners may not want to meet in the building, and some tenants may not want to meet at the owner's office as neither may want to give the "psychological edge" to the other. Although you can certainly request that the meeting be held in the building, especially if you wish to graphically show the owner the conditions of the building, it may be helpful to have alternative "neutral" locations in mind.

Request a face-to-face meeting with your owner

In the association's first letter to the owner or in a subsequent letter, write the owner (by certified mail, return receipt requested) asking for a meeting to discuss and resolve the building's problems. List the building's problems, indicating that these are the "agenda" items.

State the dates, times and location at which the association would be available for such a meeting. Indicate in your letter by when you are asking the owner to respond to your request and to whom. You can include that if the designated person does not hear from the owner by "x" date, this person will be calling him/her directly.

Clearly state that this meeting is being requested by the TENANTS' ASSOCIATION and not individual tenants and that you wish to meet directly with the owner, not a representative. (This is so you can meet with the person who has the power to make decisions, and not with someone whose only authority may be message-taker)

The letter can be signed by as many tenants as possible, one or more representatives, "Members of the
Tenant's Committee," "For the Tenants' Association," etc.

Sometimes, owners try to initiate "private" negotiations with individual tenants and are reluctant to acknowledge the group. Respond to such approaches with the reminder that it is the tenants' association requesting the meeting, not individuals.

Owner's response to the meeting request

There are three likely responses

1. Owner refuses to meet

See if you can get the refusal in writing to use as documentation in subsequent strategies. If this is not possible, the association can write a follow-up letter to the owner indicating that as a result his/her lack of response to your meeting request the association must now take further action. (Move on to STEP FOUR: REGISTERING OFFICIAL COMPLAINTS)

2. Owner agrees to meet, but at a different location and/or time

If the owner agrees to meet but at a different date and/or time, or states that he/she will only meet in his/her office, the association should decide whether to agree, or, refuse to change the location/date/time, or, whether you should question the owner as to why he/she has suggested these changes.

If the requested changes are for legitimate reasons, your association can decide accordingly. If it seems to be a power-play on the part of the owner, your association should decide how important it is to the association's goals to push him/her to meet when and where the group has decided. Are your actions a "power-play" also, or is there sound reason to hold your ground?, Keep in mind that if the association turns down negotiations because of place/time, etc., in your future actions (i.e. hearings, court, etc.) the owner may say that s/he wanted to meet, but YOU refused. Make sure you have sound reason to defend your strategy.

3. Owner agrees to meet, as requested in your letter -- Move on to planning the negotiation session.

Plan the Negotiation Session

In order to get a satisfactory agreement, you must know what you want, what you will agree to, and how you expect get what you need. At a full meeting of the tenants' association, select who will represent the group as your negotiating "team"

As it is not necessary (or frequently possible) for all of the tenants in the building to attend the negotiation
session the association needs to select a team of representatives who will speak on their behalf. One or two people should be designated spokesperson, one should be minutes taker, and others who attend will be observers. Those selected for the team should be people who are able to focus on the issues, who are able to keep calm and speak on behalf of the association. All efforts should be made to avoid uncontrolled anger.

The people selected for the negotiating team should have the sanction and the trust of the full membership of the association, especially if your group is of a size that would make it prohibitive for all to attend the negotiation session. It should also be clear that the team will not agree to anything at the session that was not previously agreed to by all the tenants.

Review and list your complaints

Your complaints are the building-wide problems faced by your building. These complaints can be the crisis that brought your building together as a tenants' association (i.e. lack of heat and hot water) as well as the other building-wide issues identified (security, lease problems, general cleanliness, roaches/rodents, etc.). Get a consensus from the tenants that these are the problems to be presented.

Prioritize your complaints

List the most serious and most important problems, and then discuss the order to present them at the meeting. Decide whether you want to start with the "easiest" working your way towards the most difficult, or vice versa. No matter how you decide to list these issues, it is critical that both the negotiating team and the full tenants' association agree to and understand the priorities.

Compile your documentation

Compile information from the tenants to document these complaints to the owner: i.e. dates/times of no heat/hot water; crime problems related to building security, a copy of the Crime Prevention Officer's report defining building-wide security needs, list of apartments in which roaches/rodents have been seen, photographs of garbage in the building, anecdotal information of how lack of "x" service has effected some tenants (i.e. Elderly, families with small children, etc.).

Define your demands

Discuss what you are asking the owner to do and by when. You should be able to clearly let the owner know what s/he is being asked to do.

Is the owner required to do all you are demanding?

There are certain things for which the owner is legally responsible, while for others s/he is not. For example, the owner is required to provide heat and hot water, and therefore, a demand that the boiler be repaired should be met. However if the tenants also decide to demand a rent abatement for the period during which there were no services, the owner is not legally bound to agree.

Even in court actions, judges may not order rent abatements to tenants; and if they do, the abatement may not be for the full amount of rent during the period of no service. However, keep in mind that this is a negotiation session, and you certainly can ask for a full rent abatement which can then be "negotiated."

Decide whether or not any of your demands can be compromised

Discuss with the tenants the "bottom line" for each of your demands. What is the LEAST the group will settle for on each demand? You've decided what it is that you want; now, decide what it is that you need. Since the team will be speaking for the full association, they need to know if there is a compromise point for the demands. For example, if building maintenance and cleanliness are problems, your "opening" demand may be a live-in super; whereas your "bottom line" may be a super living nearby who is accessible to the tenants.

At the same time, decide with the tenants which demands cannot be compromised.

Write down your demands

After completing the above tasks, put your demands in writing, not because you need to give them to the owner in writing, but because everyone in the group should agree to them and understand what they are.

Discuss how to deal with the owner's response to your demands

Get a general consensus from the group as to how the team should respond if the owner refuses to meet some or all of the demands. You do not have to make your final decisions at this time; however, depending on how the negotiations go, the team may have to determine whether they will be able to get the owner to change his/her mind by making a "threat."

For example, at the negotiations, the owner has refused to do "x," which is one of the demands that the group decided not to compromise Should the team "threaten" a rent strike: NO, not unless the team knows that the tenants will be willing to carry it out. if you make a threat that is not carried out, you won't be believed next time no matter what power you have.

Use of language

In negotiations, the words you use may make or break you. Using inflammatory or sarcastic terms for the sake of using them may serve little purpose. Keep in mind that you are trying to get the owner to say, "yes" to your demands. Think about how you can best accomplish this. LHNA suggests that you begin your negotiations with the assumption that the owner wants to come to a settlement, after all, s/he has agreed to meet with you.

Should your meeting take a different turn, then decide accordingly as to your actions at the session, as well as the future strategies of the tenants' association. Some "key" phrases that you can consider using are as follows:

"You seem to be an intelligent person who is concerned about your property. We, too are concerned
about our homes and that is why...."

"Let me ask you, do you think our request for ____ is unreasonable?"

"It's in your best interest, as well as ours for you to ____"

"We're very pleased that you will think about doing ____, but (to the attorney, if one is present) correct
me if I'm wrong, aren't (you)(owners) required, by law, to provide this?"

"What if ____" (alluding to possible consequences of no agreement)

(If owner makes attacking comments) "Do you think those kinds of statements are helpful to this discussion

"Planned" Anger/Outbursts

Sometimes, groups involved in negotiations, use "emotional outbursts" or "public disagreement" as a tactic. USE THIS TACTIC GUARDEDLY, and only if you have thought it through, planned it, AND practiced it.

In this tactic, one person assumes the role of the "heavy" angrily stating that the session is getting nowhere, that it should be ended and the association should move onto more aggressive actions (i.e. going on rent-strike, picketing in front of the owner's home, informing the religious society the owner may belong to of his/her unethical treatment of tenants etc. -- use your imaginations). A "designated" tenant then "tries" to calm down the first tenant, may bring him/her out of the meeting room to "talk" and then, upon returning, tells the owner that although you are trying to control the group, it will be hard to sustain it unless you can come to some points of agreement.

Role-Play a Negotiation Session

Frequently, tenant groups find it helpful to practice a negotiation session by role-playing. A tenant playing the part of the owner can help prepare the negotiation team for his/her responses and attitude to the association's demands.

At the Negotiation Session

Introductions

The tenant spokesperson should introduce him/herself to the owner and should introduce the other tenants present, stating who will speaking on behalf of the group and who will be taking minutes. Re-state that the team is speaking on behalf of the tenants' association.

Sometimes, owners attend negotiations with their attorney and/or managing agent. If others are present, ask the owner to introduce them and to identify their roles at this meeting. Their presence may, in fact, make the session more productive as the owner will not be able to delay decisions stating he/she has to confer with his/her attorney, etc. If the owner's attorney is present, you can comment that you see his/her attendance as a positive sign of the owner's willingness to reach an agreement.

Important note: On occasion, owners may try to "divide and conquer" by making comments such as, "Why are you here? You never pay your rent on time!" The tenant spokesperson should immediately respond that whether or not this is true, it is a separate issue that is not the purpose of the meeting. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD THE 'ATTACKED' TENANT ENGAGE IN A DEBATE WITH THE OWNER. It is in your BEST INTEREST to conduct yourselves in a civil manner.

Opening statement

How you begin can SET THE TONE for the meeting. If you choose, you can thank the owner for agreeing to meet with the tenants, and that all of the association members are hopeful that the session will be productive. You can give some "historical" data as to the forming of the tenants' association, as well as information on the number of apartments represented in the association.

Give a copy of the agenda to the owner

Although you mailed him/her one with your letter requesting the meeting, this one will be in the order you wish to address each issue, as decided by the tenants. As you present each complaint, give the reasons for including them in the negotiations.

State your demands

Negotiate

Ask the owner to respond to each demand. Depending on the owner's response, each negotiation session will vary from this point on.

Caucus

Both parties have the right to caucus (speak privately) away from the meeting table and out of hearing distance from the other party. Should the owner raise an issue for which the tenants' team is not prepared, caucus to discuss your strategy. Additionally, if the owner rejects one of your demands, but offers an alternative, call a caucus to determine whether or not you can or should accept it.

Always remember that the negotiating team is representing the full association, and the decision to reject or accept an offer should not be made in a vacuum. If it is an offer that had been discussed and agreed to by the tenants at their meeting (i.e. one of the "fall-back" positions), the team can return to the table to accept the offer. However, if the offer had NOT been considered previously, or if the team is not sure that the majority of the tenants will accept the offer, return to the table and state that a final decision cannot be made at this time, but it will be put to a vote of the full membership. (Frequently, tenants' groups have more than one negotiation session with their owner to resolve all of the issues at hand).

Another critical time to caucus is if team members start to disagree with each other at the negotiating table AT THE FIRST INDICATION OF DISAGREEMENT, (other than if it is a planned tactic) call a caucus and straighten out your strategy.

Writing out the agreement

At the close of the negotiation session, hand-write an agreement outlining what the owner agreed to do, and by when. The tenant spokesperson should sign the agreement on behalf of the association, and the owner for him/herself. HOWEVER, the owner is not under any legal obligation to sign such an agreement, so if he/she refuses, it does not in any way diminish the success of the session. Remember that the tenant taking minutes has recorded all of the points of the meeting.

After the Negotiation Session

After the meeting, call a meeting of the tenants' association to discuss the negotiations and distribute the
minutes to all of the tenants in the building. Keep a copy for the files of the tenants' association. in addition, send a copy of the minutes to the owner. These records can be used later to document the tenants' actions and the owner's responses. As stated earlier, more than one session may be required to

resolve all the issues. Try to schedule them as quickly as possible so as not to lose momentum.

Monitoring the agreement

It will be the responsibility of the tenants to document whether or not the owner complies with the agreement that resulted from the negotiations. If the owner does not comply, the tenants' association should send a letter to him/her (as always, by certified mail, return receipt requested) asking what progress is being made. This letter should also put the owner on notice that the tenants are prepared to take further action.

Step Four: Registering Official Complaints

Official complaints can be made with your city's Department of Housing. Each tenant in the building should be given the phone number for Central Complaints and should be encouraged to call EACH TIME the need arises, i.e. every day for which your building lacks heat/hot water. As the inspector will go only to those apartments or areas of the building for which complaints have been made, this is critical. When the inspector verifies the complaint, s/he will place a violation on the building.

Calling Central Complaints puts the association on record as having taken action, and can be used as proof if there is a need for further actions. In some cities, all calls made to the DOH are computerized and if necessary, you can request a printout of the complaints made from your building to use as documentation. (If a court case is pending, the printout is usually free; otherwise, a fee is charged).

Depending on the severity of the complaint, the Office of Code Enforcement will send an inspector to verify the complaint. Generally, tenants are not told when an inspector will be sent.

If the problem your building is having is (i.e.) sporadic heat/hot water, and on the day the inspector comes there is sufficient heat/hot water, no violation will be issued. Keep calling Central Complaints and keep maintaining your own records of building services.

Step Five: Request A Building-Wide Inspection

"Cellar to Roof" inspections are beneficial because:

1. The Department of Housing for most cities will not begin legal action against an owner unless an official inspection has been made documenting violations of the Housing Maintenance Code, and

2. if you go to court later, the judge will accept only the official city department records of the violations placed by the inspector as evidence of the conditions of the building.

How to request a building-wide inspection:

In writing, the tenants association should request a building-wide inspection from the Code Enforcement Unit of yout city's Department of Housing.

When will the inspection be made?

It is difficult to say when the building will be inspected after your letter has been sent. (For building-wide inspections, appointments are made). Tenants should follow-up if they have not received a response within two weeks. Once the inspection date is set, make sure that some members of the tenants association are home that day so that they can walk through the building with the inspector to point out the problems.

NOTE: Write down the inspector's name, identification number and the City Department for which s/he works.

On what is the inspection based?

The inspector will place violations on the building based on the owner's responsibilities as listed in the HOUSING MAINTENANCE CODE. [available on TenantNet.Net]

The owner is then notified of the violations that exist and will be given a certain amount of time to correct the violations, depending on the type of violation.

Tenants can contact their city hall of their department of housing to obtain a copy of the HOUSING MAINTENANCE CODE.

Can the association receive a copy of the report?

Tenants in most cities should be able to purchase a copy of the inspector's report of the violations placed on your building – ask the inspector about this when he arrives.

Often, if the association has a court case pending, the clerk at the court will give you a print-out of the violations for free.

What happens if the owner does not clear up the violations?

If the owner does not clear up the violations, the City should take the owner to court. In instances where the City initiates court proceedings against the owner, it strengthens their case if tenants attend these proceedings, and if necessary, be prepared to testify.

City governments are often not able to act on all cases due to staff shortages and a backlog of cases. Tenants, though, can use the information from Code Enforcement to take the owner to court themselves. (See "STEP EIGHT: Tenant-Initiated Court Actions").

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Step Eight: "Tenant-Initiated" Court Action

Individual tenants, as well as tenants' associations, often bring their building owners to court in order to resolve their housing complaints. Tenant-initiated court actions are referred to as "HP" actions which stands for "Housing Part." Such court actions can be very effective, but at the same time they can be a time-consuming and sometimes frustrating process.

Does the association need an attorney to take the owner to court?

In New York, no [research to see if this is also the case in your state]. Housing Court is set up so that tenants can represent themselves effectively, without the presence of an attorney. In addition, the NYC Department of Housing, Preservation and Development operates a program that offers assistance to tenants who are going to Housing Court, as follows:

Community Action/Tenant Assistance Unit (CATA)
125 Church Street
NYC 10007 (212)566-6222

At a full meeting of the association, discuss with the tenants the steps involved in taking your owner to court. Find out if the tenants are willing and able to put in the time and effort needed to initiate and follow-through on this act on their own, or whether they would be more willing if an attorney were retained. Put this to a vote. If the association decides to hire an attorney, it should be prepared to pay the lawyer's fee, as judges do not always order the owner to pay the tenants' legal fees.

Who should be prepared to go to court?

As several court appearances may be required before the case is settled, it is not necessary for all of the
tenants to be prepared to go to court on the first court date. Usually, the presence of the full membership may be needed by the third or the fourth court date. It is recommended that the tenant representatives who go to the first two or three court dates make arrangements for other tenants to be "on call" so, if necessary, they can be contacted quickly and asked to appear, depending on the progress of the case.

If some of the tenants (i.e. elderly/handicapped) need help getting to court, the association should try to make such arrangements. In addition, tenants who have small children may need help arranging for child care. (NOTE: Children CAN be brought to court; in fact, SOMETIMES. crying babies may help speed up the proceedings.) The tenants should know that each court appearance may require spending at least the entire morning, if not the entire day, in court.

Pre-court preparation

A day or two before your scheduled court dates, post notices in the building reminding the tenants of the date and location of Housing Court. If possible, go door-to-door to remind the tenants. (This is also an effective way of assessing who in the building may need help getting to court.) You can set a meeting time at the building so all can go together. The day before each scheduled court dates, compile the association's documentation and have it ready to take with you.

Possible settlement before case goes before judge:

The DOH attorney may ask you to try to negotiate a settlement between the tenants and the owner. (Should you agree, these negotiations may or may not be in the presence of the DOH attorney.) The owner may agree to make the repairs, but may argue that more time is needed. The tenants can privately caucus to discuss whether or not to accept the time frame offered. If the majority of the tenants agree, the DOH attorney will draw up a "Stipulation" that is a written statement indicating this agreement between the owner and the tenants. The stipulation, which may be handwritten, will subsequently be signed by the judge. Although signed by the judge, the terms outlined in the stipulation may not be "ordered" by the judge, as would happen after the case is tried and the judge finds for the tenants.

If the majority of the tenants do not agree with the owner's offered settlement, stand firm in your demands that the conditions require immediate attention, and demand that the case be brought before the judge.

Case is tried by the judge:

With the DOH attorney present, the judge will ask both the tenants and the owner (or the owner s attorney) to testify on the building's conditions and reasons for these conditions. Your documentation, copies of letters to the owner, official inspection reports, tenant testimonies, etc. should all be presented at this time. If the testimonies of the tenants and the owner conflict, the judge may order an inspection of the building, in such situations, the case will be re-scheduled until after the inspection.

If the judge finds for the tenants (agrees with your case), the judge will write out an "Order of Repair" which orders the owner to make repairs within specific periods of time. Generally, the amount of time allowed will be those specified by law for each type of violation. The owner will be asked by the court to sign the agreement. As noted above, a court order after trial is much more binding than a stipulation.

Follow-up that will be needed after court

The tenants, not the court, must take responsibility to monitor and/or verify whether the owner is complying with the court-order by correcting the violations within the specified time frame.

Owner makes repairs

If the owner makes all of the repairs in a timely fashion, CONGRATULATIONS!

Owner makes no repairs, or only corrects some of the violations

In situations of non-compliance by the owner, it will be up to the tenants to re-institute court action. Tenants have two courses of action open to them:

1. You can contact the DOH attorney who was present in court during the original trial and request him/her to take on the case. (Note: given the caseloads of DOH attorneys, this may not be a viable option) or,

2. You can return to the Clerk of the Court with all of the original papers as well as the court-order and request another court date with the same judge.

Whichever alternative you choose to bring your case back to court, another building inspection will have to take place to provide official verification to the court that all or some of the violations still exist. It will be up to the tenants to request this inspection.

What can the court do in cases of non-compliance?

If an owner does not comply with the court order, s/he can be found in contempt of court. The court has the authority both to fine the owner, as well as to sentence the owner to a jail term. (The fine that an owner pays does not go to the tenants; it goes to the city.)

Step Nine: Withholding Your Rent

As there is no law or statute that gives tenants the right to withhold rent, even for the most compelling reasons, a court may not accept lack of services as justification for withholding rent. When building owners bring tenants to court for non-payment of rent, the tenants must be able to soundly and accurately justify and prove why they withheld rent. Documentation must be available, and tenants should be prepared to testify before the judge. Even if you have covered all bases, the judge still may order you to pay the rent.

At the same time though, because it may cause the owner a financial hardship withholding rent may be the only action that makes an owner respond to your complaints. And (sometimes for the first time) the owner has to acknowledge and deal with the entire tenants' association rather than individual tenants in order to be paid the rent money. Although it is not necessary to have all of the tenants participate in a rent-withholding action, it is most effective when as many tenants as possible are part of this action.

In our opinion, withholding some or all of the rent is an action that should be considered by the tenants' association after you have attempted other actions. Tenants should understand fully what is involved in such an action and should be both willing and able to follow through on the actions necessary.

Rent strikes require patience, good organization and good record-keeping. Some associations run into difficulties with rent-strikes because they were either unaware of or did not safeguard against the following issues. LHNA recommends that you review the five points outlined below with your full membership to ensure that your group does not fall into these pitfalls:

1. It is unlikely that the case will be resolved immediately.

Frequently, owners wait for months before they take tenants to court for non-payment of rent (dispossess and subsequent eviction proceedings) hoping to discourage and frustrate the tenants and thus weaken the association. During that wait, the owner may be hoping that people will lose interest. And, the owner won't be making repairs. Keep in mind, though, that this year's no heat/hot water can also happen next winter, too.

2. The owner may try to weaken the solidarity of the association by only issuing dispossess notices to a few tenants.

Although all or most of the tenants may be participating in the rent-withholding action, the owner may initiate court action only against one or a few tenants at a time. These "few" tenants may be those the owner perceives as most vulnerable. If this happens, those tenants directly affected should schedule their court hearing for the same date, and, as many other tenants in the building as possible should attend these proceedings in support of the tenants and to document to the court that the full association is on rent strike. In addition, the one or few tenants who received the dispossess can file harassment charges against the owner for retaliatory eviction.

3. Tenants who receive a dispossess notice MUST respond within legally stipulated time period.

Once a tenant receives a dispossess notice, s/he must respond to it in housing court within the time period stipulated by law. Tenants who fail to do so may LOSE BY DEFAULT and risk eviction.

4. The tenants must be prepared to justify in court why they withheld rent

Once in court, the tenants must justify why they are on rent strike. Evidence in the form of written complaints to the owner, petitions, copies of official inspection reports and code enforcement documents copies of complaint forms filed with DHCR, tenant testimonies and photographs of existing conditions should be available.

5. The rent money must be managed properly

During court proceedings, the judge may order tenants to pay either some or all of the rent to the owner. If the tenants are unable to do so, they risk being evicted. Listed below are our recommended procedures for managing the rent moneys during rent withholding actions.

Rent-Strike Procedures:

Gauge the willingness of the membership to go on rent strike:

As successful as rent-withholding actions can be, they can be a lengthy and frustrating process. Also, tenants should understand that it is likely that a rent strike will result in the owner bringing the tenants to court for non-payment of rent. Thus, it is important that the association's membership be willing and able to both initiate and maintain the rent strike for as long as it may take.

During tenants' association meetings, talk about the pro's and con's. Discuss the steps involved to find out if the tenants are willing and able to put in the time and effort to carry out and follow-through on such an action. If only a few people advocate for a rent strike, you may need more time to talk it over. Some of the reasons that tenants may be wary of rent strike actions may be that they are afraid of being evicted; or they may not believe the problems are serious enough to warrant such an action, or they may not feel they can take the time off from work or other responsibilities to follow through on the actions.

Keep in mind that rent-strikes require good planning, good record-keeping and good organization. Although the participating tenants will not be paying their rent to the owner, these moneys must be set aside and properly accounted for so that if ordered by the judge to pay either all or some of the rent, it will be readily available.

Does the association need to retain an attorney?

As with "Tenant- Initiated" Court Actions, it is not necessary to retain an attorney to go on rent strike; however, discuss with the tenants whether or not they would be more willing to consider a rent-strike if they were represented by an attorney. Make sure that if the tenants choose to retain an attorney, they should be prepared to pay the legal fees.

How should the funds be managed?

To safeguard against individuals spending the rent money, it is recommended that tenants DO NOT HOLD THE MONEY THEMSELVES.

Open a bank account

The tenants can open a checking account in a local bank as an unincorporated association, in the name of the tenants' association, i.e. "331 East 70 Street Tenants Association. It is likely that the bank will ask for someone's social security number to open this account. If it is a non-interest bearing account, the bank is not required to file a 1099 with IRS.

It is strongly recommended that all transactions for this account require TWO SIGNATURES. If the association does not have officers, you can hold a special election allowing people to vote on who, from the group, will manage the rent money.

Collecting the rent money

The rent checks or money orders from the participating tenants should be made payable to the tenants' association and deposited into the group's bank account by one of the tenants whose signature is on the account.

Tenants can be asked to put their rent checks under the door of a designated tenant at the beginning of each month, or, one or two tenants can go door-to-door to collect the rent money. Each tenant should be given a receipt documenting that their rent was paid each month to the tenants' association. NOTE: Anyone who does not pay rent to the tenants' association is NOT on rent strike.

Bookkeeping

Using a ledger book purchased in any stationery store, the association should keep a record of the rent payments made by each tenant. In addition, records should be maintained of all deposits, withdrawals and dates for same. NO MONEY SHOULD BE WITHDRAWN FROM THE ACCOUNT UNLESS ALL OF THE PARTICIPANTS KNOW AND AGREE TO ITS USAGE.

A simple chart that you can use to record rent payments is as follows:

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Apt. Tenant Name Monthly Rent JAN FEB

2C Joanne Carroll $461.53 Pd. 1/3/86
$461.53

3D Lynne Daly $276.44 Pd. 1/5/86
$276.44

3F Steven Black $494.10 Pd. 1/4/86
Ernest Fisher Black $247.05
Fisher $247.05

4C NOT PARTICIPATING

etc.

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Notify the owner that the association is on rent strike

We recommends that you let the owner know that you are on rent strike. By certified mail return receipt
requested, send the owner a letter indicating that the tenants' association is on rent strike as of a certain date. List

the names of the participants and tell the owner that the group intends to stay on rent strike until the demands are met. Be specific in your demands, i.e. repair (x) by (y) date.

Preparing for the receipt of notices of petition (dispossess notices)

Eventually, the owner will issue non-payment of rent notices (dispossess) to get the rent money that the tenants now control. Keep in mind that many owners do not issue all of the non-payment of rent notices at one time.

An officer of the association or a member of the steering committee can be designated to coordinate the tenants' responses to the dispossess proceedings. Each tenant should be advised to contact the "Dispossess Coordinator" immediately upon receipt of the dispossess notice. Depending on the size of the building, this task can be broken down floor-by-floor, with floor captains working hand-in-hand with the association's central dispossess coordinator.

"Notices of Petition" (dispossess notices) served on the tenants

Generally, dispossess notices are "served" on (given to) the tenants in one of two ways:

CONSPICUOUS SERVICE: one notice is posted on the front door of the apartment, one is sent by regular mail, and one is sent by certified mail. If any of the tenants participating in the rent strike are going away for a period of time during this phase, they should make sure that someone in the association is either picking up their mail or checking their door.

PERSONAL SERVICE: A licensed process server will personally serve papers on the tenant by handing them to the tenant or to an adult who claims to occupy the apartment.

Answering the dispossess notice within legally required time period

Within the number of working days required by law from the "date of service" (Monday through Friday, not including holidays) the dispossess notice MUST be answered in Housing Court. This means that it must be brought to the Clerk of the Court at Housing Court. If the dispossess notice is not answered in Housing Court within required number of days, the tenants to whom the notices were issued may lose the case by default and risk eviction.

As the tenants receive the dispossess notices, they should give them to the association's "Dispossess
Coordinator." The "Dispossess Coordinator" can wait three days from the "date of service" to see if anyone else in the building will receive them. All of the tenants (or as many as possible) who received the notices should go to Housing Court in person and as a group The notices should be given to the Clerk of the Court. The tenants should request that the Clerk schedule the same court date for each of the hearings.

If some of the tenants are not able to go in person, the "dispossess coordinator" can answer the notice on their behalf. If tenants report to court on their own to answer the notice, they should request the same court date as the rest of the association's rent strikers.

Tenants have the right to enter a counterclaim against the dispossess brought by the owner. In cases related to lack of building-wide services, the basis for such a counterclaim is that your Warranty of Habitability has been breached since the building has been (i.e.) without heat and hot water and thus the tenants are on rent strike. (When a landlord rents an apartment, s/he "warrants" that the apartment is livable, safe and sanitary. Ref: NY Real Property Law Sec. 235-b).

The counterclaim can be entered when the tenants go to court to answer the dispossess notices. Separate counterclaims should be prepared by each tenant who received a dispossess notice, explaining why the rent has not been paid. The statement can be written in advance on a plain piece of paper, and should be signed in front of the Clerk of the Court. For those tenants unable to attend personally, the statement can be prepared and signed beforehand, but the tenant's signature must be notarized.

Pre-court Preparation

Apply for a print out of the official violations placed on the building by the Code Enforcement Inspector(s).

The evening before your scheduled court date gather and sort out all of your documentation:

1. copies of correspondence with the owner by the tenants' association
2. the return receipts from the Post Office verifying owner receipt of your letters
3. copies of correspondence by others assisting you (i.e. Community groups, elected officials)
4. copies of complaint forms filed with the city and any responses you may have received

5.tenant records of (i.e.) dates and times of no heat/hot water

6.supporting documents, i.e. U.S. Weather Bureau record of temperatures & dates

7.photographs of the building and/or apartment conditions

8.print out of the official violations placed on the building by Code Enforcement

In addition, bring with you an updated listing of the names of the tenants including both their day and evening telephone numbers so that the owner cannot later say that s/he had trouble gaining access into the apartments to make repairs.

Who should go to court?

All of the tenants who are responding to the dispossess notices (notices of petition) must appear in court with the association's documented evidence of the building problems.

To reinforce that the tenants' association is on rent strike and not individual tenants, it is very effective if
members who did not yet receive dispossess notices go to court in support of their neighbors. Tenants should understand that it may be necessary to go to court, en masse, several times as the owner may stretch out when s/he issues the dispossess notices.

...

You have the right to ask for an "INQUEST," a one-sided trial at which only the tenants present evidence. (Not likely to be granted). If the judge does grant an inquest and finds for the tenants, the owner will be ordered to correct the violations, BUT since the owner is not present, the judge will ask you to serve the order on the owner, either in person or by certified mail.

Owner Answers 'Application'

The owner may answer "Application" which means that the owner wants an adjournment to another day. If the tenants do not want the case to be postponed, you can tell the judge you are ready to prove your case and request that the trial be held, as scheduled. It is up to the judge to decide whether to hold or delay the trial.

In cases of lack of heat/hot water, "respectfully" remind the judge that such cases should not be adjourned for longer than three days.

If the judge decides to adjourn the case, request that the file on your case be marked "Final Against Landlord" which means that the trial must be held on the new date and the owner cannot get another adjournment.

"Tenant Application"

If the tenants are not ready for the trial, answer "Tenant Application" and explain to the judge why you need an adjournment, i.e. you are awaiting receipt of critical documentation.

If the owner wants to discuss a "settlement" before the trial

Some owners, while waiting in the trial part for the case to be heard, may ask to discuss with you a settlement before you actually see the judge. The tenants present should caucus on their own to determine whether or not they want to hear out the owner. (Under no circumstances should any one tenant take it upon him/her self to initiate a private talk with the owner. Remember that your building is functioning as a GROUP and not individuals).

If the tenants decide to listen to what the owner offers, you are not under any obligation to accept his/her offer. YOU STILL WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO A TRIAL before the judge.

Case is heard by the judge

It will be the tenants' responsibility to prove their case. You must be prepared to present thorough evidence, documentation and clear testimony to prove your claims related to the building's conditions. In addition, you must be prepared to prove that the owner has full knowledge of these conditions, and yet has not acted upon them. As in Tenant-Initiated court proceedings, a record of the official violations placed on the building by Code Enforcement will be critical.

The tenants should ask the court to order the owner to make the repairs. Sometimes, tenants also ask for a rent abatement based on the number of days that they were without essential services. For example, if the building lacked heat and hot water for 30 days, you can ask for one month's rent abatement. In most cases, it is unlikely that a judge will order a day-for-day full rent abatement, and may order a partial one instead. And, in some cases, no rent abatement is granted, at all.

Depending on the situation and the testimonies by both the tenants and the owner, the judge may order a court-ordered building inspection. In a few cases, judges have gone to the buildings to see, first hand, the reported conditions of the building.

Judge finds for the tenants

The judge will issue a court-order that will be signed by the owner and the tenants that can include the following:

1. the court orders the owner to make the necessary repairs, specifying the time by which the work must be completed.

2. the court orders that all or part of the rent be paid to the owner so that the money can be used by the owner to make the necessary repairs.

3. the court can agree to let the tenants continue to withhold their rent until the owner has made the repairs.

4. the court can order a full or partial rent abatement based on the number of days that the building lacked essential services.

The tenants should also ask the judge to include in the court-order a statement that if the repairs are not made, that the matter be restored to the Housing Court calendar within three days, and with the same judge retaining jurisdiction.

Follow-Up to Court Proceedings.

It will be the tenants' responsibility to notify the court if the owner does not comply and make all of the necessary repairs within the specified time. In cases of non-compliance, the tenants must go back to the Clerk of the

Court with a copy of the signed court-order to schedule a return court date within three days, with the same judge.

What can the court do in cases of non-compliance?

The owner can be found in contempt of court. The court has the authority both to fine the owner, as well as to sentence the owner to a jail term. (The fine that an owner pays does not go to the tenants; it goes to the city.)

[From "Tenant Organizing Manual" by Maria Mottola and Paulette Geanacopoulos http://www.tenant.net/Organize/Lenox/lh-toc.html with modifications by the editor. For more info, contact:

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Free Schools

How To Make A Free Skool

by Kate, l-san and Dina
http://messmedia.rootmedia.org/disconnection/archives/issue2/2freeskool.htm

Coordinating the School

Start by finding someone to coordinate the school with you. There's a good deal of work to do, and having someone to do it with will make the work a lot more pleasant, and go a lot quicker. The absolutely necessary jobs of flyering, phone tag, press releases, party hosting, and brochure designing will be more bearable and enjoyable if you're working cooperatively instead of alone.

Finding Teachers

Finding teachers is a matter of putting the word out. Make flyers and put them out all around town. Give bunches to friends and encourage people to tell everyone they know about this great opportunity for skill-sharing. Word-of-mouth will turn you up an easy semesters worth of classes. We'd advise against pestering friends to teach at the free skool. Quantity of classes shouldn't be your goal. To start with, the interest in and commitment to the free skool are your top priorities. Four classes with eager teachers is better than 10 with 6 teachers who will be sore when no one signs up or shows up for their class. Remember, teaching is a big commitment, and teachers need to want to do it. As well, keep in mind that you can't expect too many committed students. Decide on a realistic student base for your community--is it 15 people or 30? Is it more? Having more classes than you have students to fill will quickly dishearten teachers and students and coordinators alike. Teachers who get no students are unlikely to return to your free skool. Overestimating your student base is a rapid way to alienating everybody. Give yourself at least two weeks to get teachers.

Scheduling Classes

Work with the teacher to find a time convenient for them but also realistic for the class's intended participants. Some classes work fine during traditional business and school hours (M-F 9-5), but many won't. It's important for the skool to suit the students' schedule, or many won't pursue their initial interest. Also, consider how long each class can run or should run. The A-Zone free skool offers a six week semester in Fall and one in Spring. We encourage classes that need or choose to run longer to do so. With our current semester just ended, we still have 7 classes running--some to finish studying the prescribed material and some because everyone is having such a good time. Because of weather, we don't offer weekly courses in winter. Instead, we offer workshops--such as a day of bookmaking or an evening of home (or info-shop) repair. During summer, we also offer workshops instead of regular classes. Getting people to show up regularly in the summer is difficult, so, instead, we will offer workshops such as "Edible and Medicinal Plants In and Around the City,"and "Drumming In the Park."

Finding Suitable Classrooms

An infoshop is not always an ideal place for classes to meet. Nor is the local park. We've had teachers run classes out of their own homes, and other classes have run quite well at coffee shops. You can also hit up local theaters, and some community centers offer free classroom space to community groups. Make sure you coordinate teaching space with the teachers from the very beginning. Teachers will usually have good suggestions about issues related to their classes. Consider these problems we've consistently had:

Noise: Will noise disrupt the class? Will the class disrupt its neighbors?

Locked Doors: Don't schedule a class at your infoshop unless the teacher has a key. Locked out classes will turn into pissed-off people giving the free skool a bad rep.

Interruptions: Is kids' space scheduled at the same time? Do bands sound-check in the café every weekend from 5-7? Will you have to be answering the phone constantly?

Racial Sensitivity: Infoshops, artsy cafés and the like are primarily white youth spaces. If you want to generate interest in other communities, try to find racially neutral spaces. ESL, literacy tutoring, etc. should be taught in spaces that do not disempower their students. Local community centers and libraries might be good choices.

Promoting the Free Skool

With teachers, classrooms and a schedule you can now whip out a press release about your free skool -- its principles, its goals, its classes and schedule, and its opening party. Get this out to the press at least two weeks before your opening party. Simultaneously, get some nice brochures out to the public. Distribute stacks around the neighborhood and, again, give them to friends and comrades to share. Include in the brochure a description of the free skool and its principles. Include class descriptions, times, and locations. Use lots of neat graphics to illustrate the descriptions. Also include a registration form and a flyer about the excellent Back to Skool Party.

Have a Potluck for the Teachers

It's important to develop a sense of community with the teachers if the free skool is to be its best. At this get-together teachers and coordinators can get to know each other and learn more about the free skool. This is a good time to briefly discuss anarchist principles (how to teach without power-over, no one-way flow of info, knowledge as sharing not control.) You can also troubleshoot. Make sure all the times and places for classes are set up. As well, be sure teachers get a bunch of copies of the brochure. Many of the ideas and students you need to survive will come from your teachers. Encourage them to invite friends and co-workers. Offer to do an evening of flyering for any classes that want to make flyers (bring materials to do them there). Get the teachers involved. You want them to be a part of the free skool, not just their particular class. Oh yeah, and avoid the urge to turn this into a meeting. A fun social event will be more heartening than a dull consensual go-around.

Back to Skool Party

We've had great success with potlucks where interested people can get together and talk. Teachers and prospective students can meet each other and talk about classes, interests and needs. They can also get to know each other and experience a social bond before classes begin. Organize your space so that people can sit and talk comfortably. Have plates and utensils and glasses readily available. Mingle and talk about the skool. Encourage teachers to sign up for classes. Play low volume classical or jazz music. Make a point of talking to people as they come in. You will need to be host or hostess--don't expect people to come in and know what's going on. It's very important to be friendly and encouraging (but not patronizing) to people as they come in. This is a time for enthusiasm--it's a party.

After the Party

You've cleaned up after the party and are feeling pleased that most of the classes have at least one student. Now you need to call each teacher, thank them for coming to the party and give them the names and numbers of all their students. Suggest they call students each week to remind them, and let them know their participation is valuable. Similarly, you need to let each teacher know they're valuable. Especially after the first week of class, call every teacher and check-up on how things are going. You may have to console people who were totally blown off, you may also have to scramble for a new meeting place or time or new teacher (as we've done every semester since A-Zone free skool's inception with our Spanish class.)

Midway through the semester have a teacher/coordinator meeting to talk about how classes are going and see how you can help. Make it a finger-food potluck. This is one of the important ways to stay in touch with your teachers. Give as much moral support as you have. The teachers are

After your six weeks of classes have a show-n-tell and evaluation (a potluck, of course). Much less hosting is necessary, so you can relax and be a part of the fun. After everyone has eaten and is settling down, hand out evaluation sheets and get a discussion going about what worked and what didn't for students and teachers alike. Take notes. Check-in is a good time for show-n-tell--students and teachers can show/share what they've learned. Then, find out what classes are going on and which are ended. Discuss workshops for the next season--or the next semester. Most importantly, try to keep a social/party atmosphere. This should not be a meeting, but a social gathering and sharing.

Don't lose hope, the free skool will take a while to catch on. But it will, if you can keep your own enthusiasm up. At the A-Zone we've had a different coordinator(s) for each semester, with the early coordinators helping out in less taxing and demoralizing roles. For an infoshop or community center, this sort of responsibility sharing and decentralization would seem to be ideal.

Take a week or two off and get ready to start again.

* * *

A typical day at Summerhill School, Suffolk U.K.

This is a timetable for an ordinary weekday at the school. There is a glossary at the end to explain terms with an asterisk (*).

Naturally, regular times are sometimes changed by the Meeting or for some other reason. In particular, the bedtime laws are the subject of much discussion and are changed quite often. Still, the times here are correct at the time of going to press - or to web-site - and are fairly typical.

Remember also, while reading this, that just because a period is scheduled as being for `lessons' does not mean that any pupil must attend lessons then. It only means that there are lessons available which pupils may attend if they wish. (Generally pupils sign up for courses of lessons in the particular subjects that interest them at the moment, if any, and then go to most of the lessons in those courses.)

Breakfast is at 8:00 until 8:45. You have to be up and dressed by 8:30 or the "Beddies Officers" can fine you. A typical fine might be: back of the lunch queue, or half-hour work fine.

At 9:30 lessons begin. The older children "sign-up" for various subjects and then follow a timetable, just as in most other schools (except that classes are not compulsory). Children below the age of 12 go to class 1 (aged 5-10) or class 2 (aged 10-12). These have there own teachers and classrooms with multi-activity spaces. Their teacher can provide a timetable for the week, or organize activities in response to the children's needs and wishes. For art, science and foreign languages the children can choose to attend specialist lessons with the relevant specialist teachers. There are also English as Additional Language lessons, which new non-English speakers are encouraged to attend.

The range of subjects offered include:

Science (Biology, Physics, Chemistry, Astronomy)
Maths
English
French, German, Japanese
Woodwork
Art and pottery
Drama
History
Geography

Each sign-up student is given a blank timetable at the beginning of term in which they write their lessons. The timetable is changed from term to term depending on the choices of the kids and the subjects offered to them The principle of the timetable is to allow children to learn what they want. It leads to a structured day, with lessons starting at 9:30 and ending at 1:10. A computerized bell announces lessons. Each teacher keeps a register, but the children are able to choose to attend lessons or not, depending on what they want to do. We do not send reports to parents unless requested - and then only with the child's permission.

The specialist teachers are given a lot of independence in their classrooms, in terms of teaching method and objectives. But teachers are expected, by the students, to be able to teach their subjects up to GCSE (national English exams for 16 year olds).

During a normal day, children can choose to go to lessons, or do anything else. There are rules that stop you from sleeping during the day, watching TV during lessons, and you cannot go down town before 12:30.

Mid morning we have a 20-minute break for tea. Lunch is served in two sittings, the first at 12:30 - the second at 1:15.

After lunch is free time. You can play pool in the sitting room, hang out in the cafe, study on the computers, make a hut in the woods, play games, read, play tennis, go swimming (open air and therefore only in summer). Tea is at 3:30 - a cup of tea and a sandwich or biscuits.

At 4:30 the afternoon classes begin. These are more activities than classes - they are not exam orientated. Subjects range from French conversation to building a fence for the pigs! Supper is at 5:30 and 6:15. After that there are any number of things to do. Some days it may be "gram" (disco), or maybe something has been organized by the "social committee" (games)." On Tuesday evening we have our Tribunal and on Friday afternoon our General Meeting.

An evening snack, "Evening Breakfast" (cereal) is served at 9: 30.

Bedtimes range from 8:00 (lights out at 9:00) for the smallest (or "San") kids, to 11:30 (lights can stay on) for the oldest ("Carriage") kids. Elected "Beddies Officers" put you to bed.

Other regular events

Tuesday 14:00 - 15:00ish
Staff meeting Tuesday 16:30 - 17:45
Tribunal Friday 14:00 - 16:00
General Meeting

At the moment there are also regular trips go roller skating, play indoor volleyball and go swimming at the local sports center. In the Summer we swim in our own outdoor pool. Some of the kids run a café which is open on Saturday nights and on Sunday mornings for a leisurely late breakfasts (newspapers and croissants!).

Many other games happen spontaneously in the afternoons and evenings. Sometimes nothing happens and everyone gets bored. Under the current Laws, you can watch TV or play computer games at any time except during lesson time.

A note on bedtimes

Bedtimes are a source of frequent contention in Summerhill. Sometimes the Meeting decides to drop them altogether - but this never lasts too long.

They are looked after by fourteen elected Beddies Officers (all older kids, currently 13-17). They have been given the power to fine on the spot half an hour's work the next day and/or a pudding fine. If you feel you have been unfairly fined you can appeal against the fine in the general Meeting, but you must do the fine first. Compensation is 50p for work, or double pudding! At you bedtime you must be in the area of your room. The younger children get a hot drink and a snack at their bedtime. The Beddies Officers will often read stories to the little ones and anyone is entitled to a kiss goodnight from their favorite BO. It is not the houseparents' responsibility to get everyone to bed and make them shut up.

A Summerhill glossary

Beddies Officers: Elected members of the community who are responsible for putting the school to bed and getting them up in the morning.

San / House / Shack / Carriage: Where the kids sleep depends on their approximate age group. Each group has a house parent who sleeps in a room near them.

San 5 - 9/10 years
House 10 - 12/13 years
Shack 13/14/15 years
Carriage 14 upwards

The staff decide where people sleep. Becoming a carriage kid is a big thing. You get a room to yourself, and there is a certain expectation that you will now shoulder more of the responsibilities of running the school.

Staff room There are quite often kids hanging around the staff room, though staff are entitled to kick them out. Usually any kids present are evicted at tea and dinner, and these times are used as an opportunity for an informal staff meeting.

About Summerhill

Summerhill School is unique. It is a progressive, coeducational, residential school, founded by A. S. Neill in 1921; in his own words, it is a `free school'. This does not mean, alas, that it is state funded. The freedom Neill was referring to was the personal freedom of the children in his charge. Summerhill is first and foremost a place where children can be free.

There are two features of the school which visitors usually single out as being particularly unusual. The first is that all lessons are optional. A school which compelled its pupils to go to lessons would be, at best, a travesty of freedom.

Many people suppose that no children would ever go to lessons if they were not forced to. How miserable their own school experience must have been, if lessons were so unpleasant as to inculcate this belief! At Summerhill, it is rare for a child to attend no lessons at all - at least, after the initial shock of freedom has worn off. But when it does happen, no pressure is applied to the child to start going to lessons.

The second particularly unusual feature of the school is the weekly Meeting, at which the school Laws are made or changed. These laws are the rules of the school, and the Meeting is attended by all members of the school. Changes to the Laws are made by democratic agreement; pupils and staff alike have exactly one vote each.

These two features are certainly central to the school, but they fail in themselves to capture its essential nature. Needless to say, epithets like `the school where kids do what they like' similarly miss their mark. What they omit to say is that Summerhill is a community. It is a community most of whose 80-odd members are children, so teaching is a part of it; but it is not the most important part. The most important part is building and maintaining an environment where members of the community can coexist in harmony and in freedom.

http://www.s-hill.demon.co.uk/

* * *

The story of the Albany Free School Community

Twenty-six years ago, we gathered in an old building which had once been a mid-nineteenth-century German Lutheran church, then an Italian-language parochial school named St. Anthony's, in Albany's South End. The year was 1972, a time when most of the original Italian residents were moving away to the suburbs, alarmed by the rising tide of crime and squalor which were (and are) the inevitable concomitants of occupancy by a socially isolated, impoverished black matriarchal population with few organic roots in the family structures of real community, most of them having fled the segregated South following the Civil Rights era. At that time a local newspaper article dubbed us "The Shoestring School," reflecting our relative non-monied status. Well, we haven't changed all that much. We are still an integral part of this changing neighborhood, where longtime residents and newcomers are living and working together to rebuild a sense of true cooperation and commitment. And inside our building is an extraordinary learning community. There is a kind of electric aliveness about both the school and the growing community that surrounds it. You might say that we bus kids into the ghetto, although it really is no longer that, in view of the mix of all sorts of people from all walks of life that we have become, at least in our part of the South End!

The Free School is a process which must be experienced to be fully appreciated. The kids themselves make the choice to join us, after a weeks visit (we do not leave that decision to parents alone) and since the changes they may want and need to make occur only over time and the space to discover for themselves who they really are, we ask parents for a commitment to allow their children to stay in the school for at least a year, so that the value we have for them can be fully realized.

We follow a calendar similar to the public schools, and tuition is on a sliding scale based on family income, so no one is excluded. And, as with the children, so it is also with the adults who work and live in this little community. In all of the twenty-eight, now becoming twenty-nine, years of our school's existence, we have never hired a teacher, never fired anyone who came to teach with us, never asked for professional qualifications, never mandated what subject a teacher should offer! Thus, the adults, as well as the children, are only those who have really chosen to be members of our learning community!

Truly, we are always making it up as we go along which is the title of Chris Mercogliano's new book about the school, about to be published by Heinemann in 1998. The extraordinary promise of a totally voluntary learning community is one whose story unfolds year after year, as we continue to consolidate the spiritual and social harvest being reaped from this evolving process!

We are eight adults and fifty kids, ages two to fourteen white, black, Hispanic, Asian from both middle class and poor homes. Unlike the families of children in most urban schools, our parents flock to our monthly PTA meetings, eager to share their discoveries with each other of how each one responds to the changes being brought home by their children. Together, we work and play and share the joys and sorrows of growing and living together.

We are committed to finding tolerance and compassion in an environment dedicated to openness and
emotional honesty, drawing on the natural resources of the surrounding community for support and outreach. Don't expect to find a lot of expensive learning materials inside the building. We know that motivation comes from within the child and is not dependent on outward gimmicks. We have discovered that success comes quickly to children who are learning because they want to and not because they have to. And we know that children learn best when they are engaged in joyful, exciting, real activities. So, we cook, take care of goats and chickens, draw, paint, write poetry, make books, create original plays, and, almost incidentally, acquire basic academic skills in an atmosphere of work, play, and study. These programs include crafts, pottery and woodshop, music and dance, creative costume design and other sewing projects, science projects, history, cooking, geography, and several languages.

The school community also publishes two nationally acclaimed magazines: SKOLE, the Journal of Alternative Education, and the Journal of Family Life, a Quarterly for Empowering Families often sharing the children's creative work with our subscribers to SKOLE, along with the writings and drawings of children from other places. Older students participate in a wide range of apprenticeships with professionals and others in the city at large; and, every spring, raise the money themselves for a major trip, doing things like traveling around the United States or helping hurricane Hugo victims build a new septic system in a mountain village in Puerto Rico or reuning with friends at the annual National Coalition of Alternative Community Schools conferences. Experiences like these help them to develop a sense of autonomy and competence.

All of us have frequent opportunities to become well-acquainted with nature on our 250 acres of
semi-wilderness land in nearby Grafton, N.Y., where we walk in the woods, fish, swim, and even make maple syrup. Founded in 1969, we are one of the oldest urban free schools in the country. We have developed an internal economy which enables us to avoid dependence on grants from government or industry. The important element we offer children, both by experience and example, is an awareness that "You can do it!" Even the children who leave us after two or three years let alone those who are with us for the full decade! have a clear sense of confidence, dignity and leadership. Their eyes are alive and open, their shoulders back yet relaxed, their bodies poised and vigorous. In every sense of the word, they belong to themselves!

We welcome visitors, whether as potential school families, as researchers into educational innovations, as educational doubters or simply as curious observers. We need to be experienced to be understood, and allowing visitation to be unrestricted (at least so far!) has become part of our community's tradition. The children enjoy new people, readily assimilating them into their life experiences, and thereby enhancing their natural acceptance of the larger world out there. And a few who originally came as skeptics or even to scoff, have remained to learn! So give us a call, (518) 434-3072, and come visit!

http://www.empireone.net/~freeschool/

* * *

IWW and IWA

Industrial Workers of the World

The IWW is a union for all workers, a union dedicated to organizing on the job, in our industries and in our communities both to win better conditions today and to build a world without bosses, a world in which production and distribution are organized by workers ourselves to meet the needs of the entire population, not merely a handful of exploiters.

We are the Industrial Workers of the World because we organize industrially -- that is to say, we organize all workers on the job into one union, rather than dividing workers by trade, so that we can pool our strength to fight the bosses together.

Since the IWW was founded in 1905, we have recognized the need to build a truly international union movement in order to confront the global power of the bosses and in order to stand in solidarity with our fellow workers no matter what part of the globe they happen to live on.

We are a union open to all workers, whether or not the IWW happens to have representation rights in your workplace. We organize the worker, not the job, recognizing that unionism is not about government certification of employer recognition but about workers coming together to address our common concerns. Sometimes this means striking or signing a contract.

Sometimes it means refusing to work with unsafe equipment or following the bosses' orders so literally that nothing gets done. Sometimes it means agitating around particular issues or grievances in a specific workplace, or across an industry.

Because the IWW is a democratic, member-run union, the decisions about what issues to address and what tactics are pursued are made by the workers directly involved. If you think this union is for you, please be sure to read the PREAMBLE to our Constitution.

Preamble to the IWW Constitution

The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. There can be no peace so long as hunger and want are found among millions of the working people and the few, who make up the employing class, have all the good things of life.

Between these two classes a struggle must go on until the workers of the world organize as a class, take possession of the means of production, abolish the wage system, and live in harmony with the Earth.

We find that the centering of the management of industries into fewer and fewer hands makes the trade unions unable to cope with the ever-growing power of the employing class. The trade unions foster a state of affairs which allows one set of workers to be pitted against another set of workers in the same industry, thereby helping defeat one another in wage wars. Moreover, the trade unions aid the employing class to mislead the workers into the belief that the working class have interests in common with their employers.

These conditions can be changed and the interest of the working class upheld only by an organization formed in such a way that all its members in any one industry, or in all industries if necessary, cease work
whenever a strike or lockout is on in any department thereof, thus making an injury to one an injury to all. Instead of the conservative motto, "A fair day's wage for a fair day's work," we must inscribe on our banner the revolutionary watchword, "Abolition of the wage system."

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organized, not only for everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organizing industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

http://www.iww.org

Workers Solidarity Alliance

The Workers Solidarity Alliance is a nationwide organization of anarcho-syndicalists. We believe that the
working class is in a prime position to overthrow the ruling class given its economic role in society. It is we, the workers, who provide the bosses with the skills, knowledge and labor that gives them their profits. Without us, no plant or office could run. No ship could sail. No train could run. No periodical could be printed. No office cleaned or document typed. No food produced or served. Without us, you could not use surf the internet.

At present WSA only function as a small propaganda group, but our aim is to build a rank and file network of radical workers, and - eventually - a revolutionary syndicalist union. In building organizations that are directly managed by the rank and file, we not only create more effective organizations for fighting the bosses in the day to day struggles; we will also be laying the foundation for a new economy run by working people.

The Workers Solidarity Alliance is affiliated to the International Workers Association, a world wide grouping of revolutionary unions and anarcho-syndicalist propaganda groups. The IWA has existed since 1922. Its most famous union is the Spanish CNT; the leading force under the fight against Franco's fascists in the 30'ies. The IWA has now sections in 18 countries, and pro-IWA groups exists in many other countries.

http://www.iww.org/~liam/wsa-sf.html
http://flag.blackened.net/agony/wsa.html

Food Not Bombs

Starting A Food Not Bombs

Taking personal responsibility and doing something about the problems of our society can be both empowering and intimidating. Voting for the best candidate or giving money to your favorite charity are worthwhile activities but many people want to do more. What to do and how to get started is hard to discover, especially with social problems as large as homelessness, hunger, and militarism. This handbook is will assist you in getting started on a path towards taking personal direct action on these issues.

Above all, the Food Not Bombs experience is an opportunity for self-empowerment. In addition to the obvious political message we are trying to convey, the two major components of the day to day work of Food Not Bombs are the recovery and redistribution of surplus food and the feeding of the hungry. Political organizing is more rewarding if it produces both greater political awareness and direct service.

At every step along the way, you will be faced with many choices, some of which we will describe in this
handbook, others of which will be unique to your situation. You will need to make the decisions for yourselves which are the best for your local operation. We can tell you from our experience that it will be both hard work and a lot of fun. We will try to share with you those things we have learned which might assist you and help you avoid problems we have already encountered. This handbook is a beginning point from which to take off on your own adventure.

This handbook is based on more than ten years of experience. But that does not give us all the answers. Every day brings more challenges and new learning opportunities. The Food Not Bombs experience is a living, dynamic adventure which expands with every person who participates. Even today, as more and more Food Not Bombs groups start in other cities, we are discovering that each group brings with it new ideas, new visions, and new ways of developing its own identity. This handbook contains only the most basic information necessary for you to start your group on its way.

Seven Steps to Organizing a Local Food Not Bombs

At the outset, starting a Food Not Bombs might seem like more than you can handle. Work on the basics, taking one step at a time. There is no need to feel pressured into accomplishing everything all at once. It might take a couple of weeks to get things rolling or it may take months. One person cannot be a Food Not Bombs group, but one person can be the starter of one.

Once you have made the decision to start a local Food Not Bombs group, pick a meeting date, time, and place and gather together everyone who is interested to talk about what you would like to do. You might start with a group of friends, or members of an existing group, or it could be people who respond to posters in which you announce your intentions.

The following is a step by step process to get your food operation up and running. Because of your unique situation, you may need to add steps or ignore or reorder steps. Follow the path you feel will work best for your group.

Step 1: Start by getting a phone number and a mailing address. By using either a voice mailbox or an answering machine, you can have an out-going message with information about the next meeting time and place and you can receive messages so you never miss a call. Likewise, use a commercial mailbox or post office box for your permanent address.

Step 2: Next, make flyers announcing the existence of a local Food Not Bombs. By handing them out at events, posting them around town, and/or mailing them out to your friends, you will get additional volunteers. It is helpful to have regularly scheduled weekly meetings or always know the date of the next meeting.

Step 3: Arrange for the use of a vehicle. Between the members of your group, there might be enough vehicles of the right size for your needs. If not, you might be able to borrow a van or truck from a sympathetic church group or similar organization. If you are very lucky, you could be able to find someone to donate one to you. And, if none of the above leads to obtaining a vehicle, you could always hold fundraising events to raise money specifically for the purchase of a van.

Step 4: With flyers in hand, begin looking for sources of food. The first places to approach are the local food co-ops and health food stores. These types of stores tend to be supportive and are a good place to practice your approach. Tell them you plan to give the food to shelters and soup kitchens to feed hungry people. If they are interested and willing, arrange for a regular time to pick-up the food each day or as often as is practical. Where it is appropriate, leave literature which explains what Food Not Bombs does.

Step 5: Deliver the bulk food you collect to shelters and meal kitchens. It is important to get to know the food pantries and soup kitchens in your area. Learn where they are located, whom they serve, and how many they serve. This information will help you plan your delivery route and distribute appropriate types and amounts of food to each program. It is usually desirable to arrange a regular delivery schedule with each kitchen.

Step 6: Once this network becomes established, start to skim some food out of the flow without disrupting the program. With this food, start to prepare meals to serve on the streets. At first, go to rallies and demonstrations. There, the group can recruit more volunteers, collect donations, and lift the spirits of those at the event. Giving out meals at a rally builds community and supports the cause in a very direct way.

Step 7: Once enough people are involved, consider serving meals one day a week to the homeless on the street in a visible way. Cooking and serving food on the street builds community within the group and is hard work, but also great fun. Pick locations which are highly visible. Part of our mission is to help make the "invisible homeless" more visible. We also want to reach out to everyone with our political message 'food not bombs' and we want to be very accessible.

The "Office"

In general, it is the Food Not Bombs style to operate on as low a financial level as possible. Always strive to get the most out of your resources. One way to keep operating expenses low is to use only a mailbox and an answering service as your office. Thus, by not having an office, there is no need to staff the office with valuable volunteer time. This allows volunteers to spend more time out in the street. Our tables, whether serving meals or distributing information, become the "office" where our group business is conducted and where people who want to meet us can find us.

One of our goals for doing street work is to bring people with different economic backgrounds directly into contact with each other. If your "office" is on the street, then you are very accessible, all your actions are public, and the people who are forced to live on the streets will, over time, develop a great deal of respect for your group. By having your "office" on the street, you will experience directly a piece of street life and you will develop first hand knowledge of the popular opinions on the issues of the day. The cost for establishing this part of the Food Not Bombs operation is affordable for any group.

Decision Making and Leadership

One of the goals of Food Not Bombs is to create opportunities for self-empowerment. The way to do this within the group is to encourage every member to participate in decision making and accept leadership roles.

When everyone participates in the discussion of an idea, trust is developed and people feel valued and committed to the result. A proposal is stronger when everyone works together to create the best possible decision for the group. Any idea can be considered, but only those ideas which everyone thinks are in the best interests of the group should be adopted.

Many progressive groups avoid having leaders who might dominate the group. However, it is a mistake to think a group does not need leadership. To avoid having power concentrated in the hands of a few or entrenched leaders, encourage leadership skills in every member of the group and rotate leadership roles. This can be accomplished by holding leadership skill-building trainings and by encouraging and supporting people to accept leadership roles, especially those who are traditionally overlooked.

Generally, this process is called consensus. There are several models of consensus which your group might choose to adopt. It is most important, however, that whatever process you use, it is clear and consistent so all can participate fully. (See bibliography for resources.)

Outreach

Outreach is very important. It is less expensive and more effective than one might imagine. The appendix of this book has a recruiting flyer you can use which has been effective in attracting new people to Food Not Bombs. You can use this copy by putting your phone number and address in the appropriate spots or you can create your own. This and other flyers can then be put on bulletin boards in local schools, cafes, health food stores, bookstores, and launderettes. Post recruitment flyers on a regular basis; it is good to continually bring in new people with fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

In addition to posting in public spaces, visit all the peace and justice organizations in your community. Leave your flyers and collect their literature which you can place on your information table.

Also go to all the soup kitchens, pantries, shelters, and advocacy groups for those suffering from economic injustice, and distribute your literature. Don't be discouraged by a lukewarm reception. At first, these groups might view Food Not Bombs as competition for scare resources. Or they may be strongly opposed to connecting the issues of hunger, homelessness and economic injustice with (other) political issues such as militarism. Many direct service agencies accept the role of caregiver to those most oppressed in our society without challenging the root causes of the oppression. They prefer to keep a low profile and support the status quo and they will be very fearful of anyone who does challenge the system. However, because the vision of Food Not Bombs is the creation of abundance by recovering surplus food, the free food will be a way to reach out to them and gradually win their support. This kind of outreach will become the foundation of widespread community support which might be very valuable to your group in the future.

As your effort grows, you can organize and sponsor special events which will attract more folks to join in the work and fun. Examples of these kinds of events are concerts, poetry readings, rallies, lectures, and film festivals. Before these events, be sure to call all the press listed in the yellow pages in your town and invite them to come. Even though the coverage can sometimes be unsympathetic, it is still valuable to have Food Not Bombs mentioned in the press. In our experience, most people understand the concept 'food not bombs' and are not misled by negative reporting.

At events, a special attention-grabber is the display of a huge banner proclaiming "Food Not Bombs". The banner is very useful when the media is taking pictures, because, if nothing else, the words "Food Not Bombs" will be displayed. You can use the Food Not Bombs logo of a purple fist holding a carrot as much as you want. The national office has buttons, bumper stickers, t-shirts, and banners with this logo for you to use for fundraising and promotion. (See national contact list in the appendix.)

Food Collection

Food recovery is the back-bone of the Food Not Bombs operation. It might at first appear to be a major
challenge to discover sources of surplus food, but it mostly takes is confidence and patience. Every business in the food industry is a potential source of recoverable food; from wholesale to retail, production to distribution. Sometimes it may take some creativity and persistence to convince a

stubborn manager to allow you to have some "waste" food, but in most instances, the businesses will be very cooperative.

You will need to decide if you want the business owners or managers to know that some of the food will be used for political organizing or even the name Food Not Bombs. At some stores, this will not be an issue; at others, it might be better left unsaid, until they get to know you better.

Start by making arrangements to collect food at organic produce warehouses, bakeries, and natural food
stores. Ask the workers at these businesses if they have any edible food which they regularly throw away and, if so, would they be willing to give it to you. Be sure to point out to them that by collecting this food, you will be saving them money on their waste disposal bill. They will certainly be aware of how expensive it is to have this surplus hauled away as waste and of how the costs keep growing each year as more and more landfills become exhausted. One of the by-products of our program is the reduction of waste in our society.

While in the process of collecting contacts in the food industry, you should be determining the availability of drivers and vehicles. There needs to be at least one volunteer to drive each day. Make a schedule which is convenient to both store and driver. It is important to be flexible but also reliable: businesses will be hesitant to participate if they do not feel they can rely on this method of "waste' removal on a regular basis. Take time to make friends with the workers at the sites where food is collected. It is these workers who make day-to-day decisions about how much food is recovered and they can make an effort to recover even more food if they feel comfortable with you.

It is a tradition with Food Not Bombs to always be on time. Therefore, do not over-extend yourself. It is actually more common to get too much food than not enough. But only do as much as is comfortable; some recovery of food is better than no recovery of food.

The variety of food which can be recovered is unlimited. Be creative. Any food which is perishable is going to be intentionally over-stocked so there will be a regular surplus which is destined to be wasted. Look for sources of surplus bagels, bread and pastries, organic fruits and vegetables, tofu and some packaged foods. Sometimes, you might need to buy non-perishables like rice and beans, miso, condiments and spices at natural foods stores. Often these stores will supply these types of food for free.

Eventually, work your way up to collecting at warehouses, farms, and from wholesale distributors. The volume of food available to recover is immense. Be selective: take what you can use which is of the highest quality. In many places, there is no need to recover commercial produce because there is plenty of organic produce to recover! In fact, one of our political messages is that there is more edible food being thrown away each day by the food industry than there are hungry people to eat it.

Food Distribution

At first, deliver the bulk food you collect to soup kitchens and pantries in your area. From your earlier research and contacts, it is likely you will already know which kitchens are interested in receiving food. Also deliver bulk food to food pantries, striking workers, day-care centers, battered women shelters, refugees, and the like. Make contact with organizations which already work directly in the community. Ask if their staff would take responsibility for equitable distribution of free food once a week. Since they already have a base of operations in the community, the staff knows who is in need, how great their need is, and how best to distribute it to them. Encourage them to use the free food distribution program as a way to increase participation in their other programs. Use the food as an organizing tool. Sometimes, Food Not Bombs organizes distribution of bulk food at housing projects or on street corners. You might also give out bulk food along with the prepared meal at your food tables. One of our goals is to encourage the awareness of the abundance of food and undermine the market of scarcity which places profits before people.

The Kitchen

Once you have this network of collection and distribution in operation, begin using some of the recovered food to prepare hot meals. You will need to find a kitchen to sue and obtain several pieces of equipment which are necessary for feeding large numbers of people and are not found in the average kitchen. A full equipment list can be found in the section on Recipes.

There are several methods of finding suitable kitchen space. Sometimes it is possible to arrange to use the kitchen in a community center, place of worship, or public building. A large kitchen in a collective house or a number of average-size kitchens might be sufficient. Sometimes cooking right on the street in a field kitchen is the best solution. Each situation has its advantages and disadvantages. The demands of your meal distribution program determine your kitchen needs. Often, a combination of kitchen spaces is necessary for different aspects of your schedule. You might use a church kitchen for your weekly meal to the homeless, a field kitchen for a large rally in a park, and a volunteers kitchen for a catered lunch; the key is in finding the right size kitchen for each event.

Since most Food Not Bombs groups do some amount of cooking outdoors, it is a good idea to acquire a camp stove. Propane seems to be the best fuel for the cooking in field kitchens. The tanks can be refilled and even the smaller ones last a long time on one filling. It is worthwhile to obtain a strong, heavy-duty stove. It might cost more but it will last longer and will be safer with the large pots. This and all the other equipment needed for food preparation and serving can be obtained at restaurant supply stores, thrift stores, yard sales, kitchen auctions, and friends. (See the appendix under Equipment Lists for more details.)

In general, the most important piece of equipment is the cooking pots. You will need all different sizes, but the most valuable are the very large pots of 40 quarts or more. Generally, a couple of hundred people can be fed from a pot this size, depending upon what is prepared in it. But these pots are hard to come by; most people who have pots this size will not loan them out. The cheapest pots to buy are aluminum, but we discourage their use because of toxicity. If you must use aluminum pots, never prepare miso or tomato based recipes in them; the aluminum will corrode and leach into the food. Try to have stainless steel pots donated to you. Once you have a collection of pots (and lids), be very careful with them. It is not uncommon to lose pots between the kitchen and the vehicle or the vehicle and the serving table. Also, try to avoid having the pots in a situation which might lead to arrest. Transfer the food into smaller (less valuable) pots or plastic buckets in these situations.

Therefore, another valuable piece of equipment is the 5 gallon plastic bucket. These can usually be obtained for free from natural food stores and co-ops. Ask them to save and give you peanut butter buckets, tofu buckets, and other large plastic containers which food is delivered in which they do not need or have to return. Don't forget to collect the lids, too. These containers are valuable for food storage, transportation, and serving and can also be used for many other purposes. Since they are fairly easy to get, they also are good to use in situations where you cannot be sure they will be returned to you.

Food Preparation

The major issue to address when considering preparing food at low cost for large amounts of people is one of logistics. Getting the proper amount of food, the necessary equipment, a suitable kitchen, and the cooking team all together at the same time might sometimes seem like a miracle. But it can be done!

Each local chapter will develop its own method of food preparation. The following is a general guide.

The volunteer cooking team usually meets at the kitchen a few hours before the meal is scheduled to be served. They often help unload the food and equipment from the Food Not Bombs vehicle. Always wash your hands with soap before cooking. Plan the menu by looking at what food you have and how many people you are planning to feed. Sort out all the useful food and wash it. The most time-consuming job in this process is washing and cutting the vegetables. Each cooking team usually operates with whatever style of management that is comfortable to them. Sometimes, one person becomes "the cook" for the whole team. Other times, each person takes one dish and prepares it from start to finish. Or, the team may choose to do everything cooperatively. The recipes you use can be ones you already know or they can be from the recipe chapter of this book. Once the meal is prepared, the cooking team cleans the kitchen, packages the food for transportation, and loads it into the Food Not Bombs vehicle for delivery to the serving site.

Sometimes the serving team and the cooking team are the same people; usually they are different people. The serving team arrives at the serving site and organizes the distributing of the food and the staffing of the literature table. Always try to have a hand-washing bucket (with soap) and rinse bucket (with just a little bleach) so the volunteers can wash their hands before serving. Try to keep the food away from the literature. If a long line develops, have someone go up and down the line and hand out bread or muffins or maybe something to drink (on hot days) so the wait is not too unbearable. This also helps reduce the tension created by the fear that the food might run out. If you can find musicians or other street performers to come and perform while you're serving, this will also reduce tensions and create a very positive, festive atmosphere. The serving team is also responsible for cleaning up both the site and the equipment and returning the equipment to wherever it is stored.

The collection of cash donations at the food table is an ongoing debate. Sometimes, it is completely out of place to ask for donations. In other situations, people insist on being allowed to contribute to the collective work. In any event, always encourage the idea that everyone can have as much food as they want, without regard to their ability to pay for it. Food is a right, not a privilege.

Outdoor Tables and Field Kitchens

At every outdoor event, the first decision the group needs to make is where to place the tables. There are many important issues to consider. If possible, it helps to have seen the location ahead of time. At demonstrations, having the food table as close as possible to the focal point of the demonstration has been very successful. Being close to the action encourages people to stay involved and not drift away. Sometimes the most desirable location is the one with the most foot traffic; other times, it is the most visible, accessible location for people without homes. However, it is good to be sensitive to nearby restaurants and vendors with similar types of food. They might complain and have your operation shutdown if they feel it is in competition with them.

The following diagrams offer two possible lay-outs for set up of your field kitchen. One is more basic, involving a minimum of equipment. The other involves more equipment and would be able to pass a health department inspection in most cities. In general, Food Not Bombs believes that our work does not require any permits. However, the city or the police will use the permit issue as a way to harass us in an attempt to shut us down. Therefore, it is sometimes a good idea to have a fully equipped field kitchen. There may still be attempts to shut you down, but you can point out that it is not a health but a political issue which they are raising. It is the Food Not Bombs position that we have a right to give away free food anytime, anywhere without any permission from the state.

Enhancing a Food Not Bombs

Street Theater

From the very beginning, we saw all of our street activity as theater. This included not only our food tables, but also our literature tables, our presence at other peoples' events, etc. We recognized that the personal is political and the political becomes personal. We wanted to dramatize the reality of the militarization of our society by highlighting the social costs and the human suffering. We created opportunities to expose this injustices through soup lines, by depicting military types holding a bake sale to by a B-1 bomber, offering the "tofu challenge" instead of the "Pepsi Challenge", and even a silent theater piece in which a person dressed as a paper maché missile chased a person in a paper maché world, threatening to destroy it.

The limits on what kind of theater you present are only your imagination and your pocketbook. Scenarios have included anything from setting up a food and literature table with some musicians to full scale productions with amplified sound, lights shows, slide projectors, puppets, and speakers all happening at once around your food and literature tables. Sometimes these events are planned entirely by Food Not Bombs; sometimes they are organized by other groups and we just attend with food and literature. Do not forget to include your audience in the performance whenever possible.

Because we have always approached our work as theater, it has always been easy to adapt to various situations. We recognize and value the interconnectedness of progressive issues. We try to expose how militarism and imperialism influence our everyday lives. When we participate in an event highlighting a particular issue, we try to show the way in which this issue connects with our issues. Food is often an excellent bridge or connector.

Our literature reflects our wide scope of concerns. We promote and support many events in our community by carrying their flyers on our tables. We strive to be as visible as possible. This means searching for locations to set up a table. Sometimes the ideal situation is in a park or plaza. Other times it is important to set up outside a bank, a corporate office, a government building or military installation. How often to set up is equally important. The more we are outside, in the public eye, the better our message gets out. We encourage groups to be as regular as possible to establish a reputation. Often, the Food Not Bombs table is a landmark for activists and street folks looking to connect with the movement in a new city.

Fundraising

Food Not Bombs has had a long-standing tradition of being very relaxed about fundraising. We prefer receiving money in small amounts, rather than large and difficult to manage donations of money from people who might be quite distant from us geographically or politically. We feel that it is better to have a wide base of support from the community with whom we have direct contact than to rely on a few foundations or wealthy people who might manipulated or pressure us to cater to their special interests. While this kind of grass-roots fundraising is more difficult and time-consuming, it allow us to remain on the cutting edge of the political issues of our time, and also requires constant contact with our supporters.

Non-profit, Tax-exempt Status

People often ask if we are a non-profit, tax exempt corporation. Generally, we are not interested in the bureaucracy needed to maintain such an organization. Sometimes, you might use an "umbrella" to assist in arranging a particular donation of money that specifically needs to be given to a non-profit, tax-exempt group. This is fine and it is usually not too difficult to find a tax-exempt organization to do this for you. Specifically, do not seek permission from any government agency to engage in the work you do. Once a group becomes a tax-exempt organization, the I.R.S. has the right to oversee all aspects of its operation and limits much of what it can do. Rather than try to hide from them, we prefer to ignore them.

Buttons and Bumper Stickers

One way to raise funds is to set-up literature tables with buttons, stickers, books, and t-shirts at high volume pedestrian traffic areas or political events. It has a tremendous effect to be regularly out in the public eye, exercising your right to free speech and collecting donations. For some groups, receiving donations for buttons and bumper stickers is a major source of income. When people ask how much, use the phrase "one dollar, more if you can less if you can't". Purposefully create a loose atmosphere so that people donate what they can without pressure or embarrassment. You will often raise more money and awareness if volunteers stand behind the literature and directs peoples attention to a particular flyer or asks them a questions like " have you heard about our next event?" (Note: At large outdoor events, remember to take the money out of the donation bucket periodically as the day passes so someone doesn't grab the bucket and run off with all that you brought in that day.)

Catering

Sometimes groups will ask us to provide food for their events. It might be hot soup at an outdoor rally or lunch for a conference. Usually, the sponsoring group gives us a donation of a dollar or more per person. If they have special arrangements (like transportation or housing), they might ask for additional contributions directly from the people served; this is up to the organizers. However, if the event is outdoors or open to the general public, the food is always free and never denied to someone because of lack of money. At some events, the food is cooked at the site; at others, it is transported already cooked. At all events, try to be on time. Obviously, it is especially important when you are feeding 100 people lunch at noon during a conference. Usually, it is possible to bring your literature table with you and set it up next to your food table or the lobby or hallway.

Concerts and Events

Food Not Bombs groups often sponsor concerts and events to have fun and raise money. If you plan ahead, your event can be a big success. Whether for rallies, concerts, or poetry readings, it is important to find a location and date at least 6 weeks to 2 months in advance. When making the arrangements, be sure to get the correct addresses of all parties involved so you can stay in touch. Send a letter confirming the date, time and other arrangements to the managers of the location as soon as you can. Once you have the space confirmed, contact the performers and send them letters confirming the date, time, location and duration of their performance. It would be an unfortunate experience if the performers did not show simply because they never received letters of confirmation. If the event goes smoothly, the performers will support you in the future. If you are having a concert, ask the bands if they have sound equipment and a sound person. If not, they may know someone who does. Work out a complete schedule in advance with specific times for each performer including set up and sound check. Be sure to send the schedule to all parties involved including the people whose space you are using.

Its also a good idea to send out flyers advertising the event to local organizations six weeks in advance. An announcement in their monthly newsletter calendar listings can be very valuable. In addition, post flyers all over town and put them on your table for one month in advance. If possible, send 30 second public service announcements to local radio stations. Make a follow-up phone call to be sure they received it and suggest it be put in their public service announcement folder.

At the event, set up a literature table with buttons, stickers, and shirts. Depending in the type of event, you may want to ask for a donation at the door or pass the hat during the event. At bigger events, you may want to create a program, which can also be an opportunity for fundraising. The program itself can be sold at the event and you can sell ads in it to local groups and businesses. And of course, a table with 'refreshments' would be a good opportunity to raise additional donations.

http://www.foodnotbombs.net/

Homes Not Jails

HNJ was formed in 1992 to advocate for the use of vacant and abandoned housing for people who are are homeless. With people literally dying on the sidewalks in front of vacant buildings, housing advocates, homeless advocates, and people who were homeless came together to find ways to utilize vacant buildings.

Homes Not Jails is an all-volunteer nation-wide direct action housing advocacy movement. Since our government fails to provide housing for those in need, and seems only interested in putting more poor people in jail, Homes Not Jails is providing housing by any means necessary.

Homes Not Jails operates on two levels:

Public Actions & Legislative Advocacy - To demonstrate the availability of vacant housing and to promote proposals to utilize the housing, HNJ will publicly occupy vacant buildings. These are civil disobedience actions. Over the years, there have been many such occupations which have been used to promote awareness of the need to utilize vacant buildings and to promote legislative solutions.

Squatting - Realizing that government would be slow to act to utilize vacant buildings for housing - and that people need housing now - HNJ simultaneously opens up vacant buildings and helps people who are homeless move in. Since 1992, hundreds of these "squats" have been opened. Many have lasted for years and recently Homes Not Jails filed for legal ownership (after paying the property taxes) of a squat opened in 1993 - a process known as adverse possession.

http://www.homesnotjails.org

Anti-Racist Action Network

The ARA-Net is a network of independent anti-racist/anti-fascist groups across North America. Anti-racists have been using the name ARA since the 1980s, but in 1994 we began meeting more regularly and sharing our experiences, skills and sense of humor across the continent. In 1994 there were only a few chapters; now there are 100 or more.

See the ARA Network web-site, to find out which chapter is closest to you: http://www.aranet.org/

The ARA Network is not centralized. Each group is independent and makes its own decisions. But we are united by four points of unity:

1. We go where they go. Whenever fascists are organizing or active in public, we're there. We don't believe in ignoring them or staying away from them. Never let the nazis have the streets.

2. Don't rely on the cops or the courts to do our work. This doesn't mean we don't ever go to court. But we must rely on ourselves to protect ourselves and to stop the fascists.

3. Non-sectarian defense of other anti-fascists. In ARA-Net, we have lots of groups and individuals. We don't agree about everything, and we have a right to differ openly. But in this movement an attack on one is an attack on us all. We stand behind each other.

4. ARA-Net intends to do the hard work necessary to build a broad, strong movement against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia, discrimination against the disabled, the oldest and the youngest of our people. We intend to win.

Copwatch

Introduction

This handbook is intended to introduce people to the main concepts of police observation. It is far from complete and we certainly learn more every day. It is true that in different parts of the country and in different situations, the people will devise COPWATCHing methods which better suit their own situation. Please use the information in this handbook as a way of stimulating discussion in your organization and providing a basis for forming your own police monitoring project. It can be quite challenging and at times rewarding. Good luck. Hope this helps.

Who is COPWATCH?

We are a group of community residents and students who have become outraged by the escalation of police misconduct, harassment and brutality in recent years. We have joined together to fight for our rights and the rights of our community by taking on the task of directly monitoring police conduct. That’s right. We walk the streets and watch the police. Although it is important to resist police brutality by taking cops to court, filing complaints and having demonstrations, we believe that it is crucial to be in the streets letting the police know that THE PEOPLE will hold them accountable for their behavior in the community. We have no single political or religious belief. Our volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and beliefs. What we share is the belief that citizen participation in these issues and monitoring of the police is a crucial first step towards building a movement which is capable of stopping police violence and of challenging the increasingly powerful role of police throughout our society.

If you have been a victim of police abuse, witnesses abuse or are just plain fed up with police misconduct and want to do something about it, give us a call. We will train you to COPWATCH. We also need artists, writers, researchers, outreach workers, organizers and others to help. We are an all volunteer group so your help is ALWAYS needed!

Purpose and Goals

To reduce police violence and harassment through accountability.
Directly observe the police on the street
Walk in pairs; stop, watch and document incidents
Identify police (name, badge number, department, car license plate)
Record with camera, video camera if possible
Write detailed report describing the incident
Collect witness statements
Follow up with public pressure in legal proceedings
Support brutality victims in defense of false charges
Encourage people to file complaints or even sue police
Lobby to stop discriminatory legislation and policies that increase police powers over people’s civil and human rights
To empower and unite the community by looking out for each other

Educate the community about their rights
Distribute literature; do “ Know Your Rights” training
Expand community support for victims of police crime.
Publicize incidents in the COPWATCH Report and local press
Broaden community understanding of issues related to police violence
Encourage people to solve problems WITHOUT police intervention
Encourage people to exercise their right to observe the police

The Law

It is helpful for COPWATCHers to have an understanding of a few key legal concepts before going out to watch cops. You don’t have to be a lawyer to document police activity, but if you want to be more assertive about your rights and those of the community then it is worth taking some time to become familiar with the law.

There are many sources of law. The ones that are most relevant to COPWATCH are the state laws which are found in your state's Penal Code and local laws which are part of the Municipal Code. In addition, there are federal laws that you probably won’t run into much on the streets. However, it is worth knowing that everyone’s civil rights are, at least theoretically, protected under the U.S. Constitution and federal law.

Types of Violations

Infractions

These are minor offenses such as jaywalking, illegal parking, open container of alcohol in public, being in certain parks after curfew, being a minor in possession of spray paint or large marking pens, etc. When an officer sees this kind of activity, s/he can ask to see I.D. If you have I.D. and you do not have any outstanding warrants, the cop should just write you a ticket and be done with it. If you don't have I.D. on you, the cop HAS THE OPTION OF TAKING YOU TO THE STATION TO VERIFY YOUR IDENTITY OR SIMPLY WRITING YOU A TICKET AND LETTING YOU GO. This is up to the officer. You aren't supposed to have to go to jail for infractions in and of themselves.

Misdemeanors

These are crimes such as shoplifting, trespassing, resisting, delaying or interfering with an officer in the course of his/her duty. Expect that you will be searched, arrested and taken to jail until you are either arraigned, bailed out or released on your own recognizance. (O.R.ed)

Felony

These are major crimes. Murder, rape, robbery and many drug related crimes are considered to be felonies. Expect that you will be searched thoroughly and will be in custody at least until you are arraigned.

Types of Stops

It is very important that you understand why an officer is stopping someone and what their rights are when they are stopped. Determine exactly what kind of stop the officer is making.

Consensual Stop

This is when the cop approaches you and begins talking to you. The cop may even ask to see your I.D. You don't have to show it. Ask the cop "Am I free to go?". You don't have to talk to the cop or even remain in the area unless the cop says "No, you can't go" and has a reasonable suspicion to detain you.

Detention

The police are allowed to detain you if they have a "reasonable suspicion" to believe that you have committed or are about to commit a crime. The officer must have some reason for stopping you. They can't just say that you don't look like you live in the neighborhood or that they "had a hunch". The detention should be limited in its purpose and scope. They can conduct a pat search of the outside of your clothing in order to check for weapons, but you DO NOT HAVE TO CONSENT TO A SEARCH of your pockets or bags. You do not have to answer any questions. You may want to produce your I.D. in order to avoid being detained for a longer time while they try to verify your identity.

Arrest

This means that you are in police custody and you are being charged with a crime. You will be thoroughly searched as part of the booking process. You have a right to know why you are being arrested. Even though police often won't tell you, you have the right to remain silent and the right to a lawyer. Don't give up these rights.

Extra Legal Info

Answering Questions

Legally, when a person is arrested or detained by a police officer, he or she does not have to answer any questions to the officer, on the grounds that it may be self-incriminating. (Miranda codes).

Resisting or Obstructing an Officer

The police will often threaten COPWATCHers with this charge, but remember you do have the right to observe as long as you are not attempting to interfere with the officer.

Use of Force to Effect Arrest

Section 835.a of the California Penal Code describes the only “legal” use of force by an officer is in order to attain an arrest. “Any peace officer who has reasonable cause to believe that the person to be arrested has committed a public offense may use reasonable force to effect the arrest, to prevent escape or to overcome resistance.”

Assault by an Officer

Police brutality is defined in the California Penal Code as, “Police breaches of due process guarantees by the physical abuse of citizens without legitimate cause.” Section 149 of the California Penal Code makes it illegal for a cop to assault or beat any person “without lawful necessity.”

Police Search Powers

The police have the power to question someone only if they have “reasonable suspicion” that specific facts connect that person to a specific crime. In this case, the cops can also pat someone down to feel for a weapon, and if they feel something that feels like a weapon, they can go into that person's clothing to look for it. Otherwise the cops can only search someone's pockets, back pack, or belongings if that person:

1. Has been arrested for a specific crime,
2. Has a search clause as a condition of probation, or
3. Gives the police permission, which nobody is obliged to do.

Police Seizure Powers

Police may not confiscate someone's belongings unless they are illegal or that person has been arrested for a crime. If possessions are confiscated, the California Penal Code entitles the owner to a receipt (1535) and a return of the possessions after the resolution of the case (1537). Any evidence obtained through the seizure may be suppressed from being used in court if the seizure was unreasonable (1538.5).

Gang Profiling

Sometimes cops use petty laws to stop people in order to take their pictures. These photos are often used to create files on people and to portray people as "gang members". Detaining people to take photos merely because they are suspected gang members is impermissible. (People vs. Rodriguez (1993) 21 Cal. App. 4th 232.)

Various State and Local Laws you should Research in your Area

Panhandling
Lodging
Trespassing
Drinking in Public – Note: Having alcohol on your breath is NOT a crime.
Open Container
Knives, possession of
Bicycles
Dogs
Obstructing Sidewalk
Minors in Possession of Tobacco

Tactics

Intimidation Through Accountability

Our main tactic in COPWATCH will be to discourage police brutality and harassment by letting the cops know that their actions are being recorded and that they will be held accountable for their acts of harassment and abuse. To this end we will:

Record incidents of abuse and harassment
Follow through on complaints
Publicize incidents of abuse and harassment
Work with the Police Review Commission
Educate those who don't believe that police harassment exists

Diffuse Situations

People don't want to be arrested. As COPWATCHers, we don't want to escalate a situation to where police arrest someone as a way of getting back at us. We want cops to treat people with respect and to observe their rights. Often, cops forget that homeless people and others actually have rights. We may need to remind them from time to time. We must learn how to assert our rights and to encourage others to assert their rights without endangering someone who is already in some amount of trouble.

We do not attempt to interfere with officers as they make routine arrests. We document and try to inform the cops when we feel that they are violating policy or the law. Attempting to stop someone from being arrested often has serious consequences for the person being detained as well as for the reputation of COPWATCH as being a non-violence based organization. In a physical encounter with police, we must realize that the cops have weapons, prisons, courts and judges to back them up. In addition, we do not want people to be nervous when they see COPWATCH coming to help them. We want to keep people from going to jail in the first place and not send them to jail with more serious charges.

Empower the Community

As people on the streets serving the public, we are not only concerned with the cops. We are concerned about the PEOPLE. Our effectiveness as COPWATCHERS will be greatly enhanced if we are trusted by the community. During our shifts, we must try to get to know the people who hang out on the street. For this reason we will try to schedule people who know the area with those who are newer to the scene. Building relationship is crucial. We can listen to people and help when it is possible. This aspect of COPWATCH depends on the willingness of the members to get to know and appreciate the street community.

When the streets are quiet and there is no police activity, a COPWATCHer can spend time distributing the "Know Your Rights" cards or just getting to know people. Introduce yourself. Explain to people that you are with COPWATCH and that you want to hear their stories. If people know that you are trying to help and that you care, that can be empowering.

Depending on how familiar and/or comfortable you are, you can assist people with problems that arise. We want our community to solve problems wherever possible WITHOUT POLICE INTERVENTION. If you can help folks resolve a conflict, communicate, understand each other you are doing great. It is crucial that we move our communities away from the idea that we are totally dependent upon police for justice and safety.

Shift Procedures

Begin Shift

Be sure your warrant status, bike or car is up to date. Don't give the cops any opportunity to bust you. Identification can be very helpful if the police detain you.
Have a partner for safety as well as good COPWATCHING. It is VERY important not to confront the police alone. You must have a witness and someone who can verify YOUR story in case of a problem.
Organize to meet your partner at a mutually agreeable time and location
Make sure that you are not carrying anything illegal
Wear identification (COPWATCH identification badge)

Be sure that you or your partner brings things you will need to COPWATCH:

1. Incident forms
2. COPWATCH Handbook
3. Complaint Forms (BPD and UCPD)
4. COPWATCH literature to distribute
5. Tape recorder, scanner, video recorder, cameras
6. Penal Code

During Shift

Shifts last for approximately 3 hours. Please be on time for your shift as your partner is probably waiting for you. If you are unable to work your shift please call your partner and the shift coordinator so that you can get a substitute.

Try to be on the street for as much of your shift as possible (don’t spend an hour in a coffee shop). Be where people can see and talk to you. After each incident, take time to fully fill out the incident report.

As you observe a situation, one partner records what officers are saying or doing, while the other one quietly gets information from witnesses. Consult and share information. Get a firm grasp of the situation FIRST. Record as much information as possible. Witness names and numbers and badge numbers are most important. In fact, every officer must wear either a number or a nameplate when they are in uniform. (California Penal Code section 830.10) It also helps to write down when, where and what time the incident happened. If there has been an injury, encourage the person to see a doctor and take pictures of the injuries as soon as possible.

Remember that you have the right to watch the cops. You don't have the right to interfere. Interfering with a cop is a violation of California penal code section 148 (delaying, obstructing or resisting arrest). If a cop wants to send you a message, they will arrest you for 148 and then, even if they don't press charges, you still had to go through the unpleasant experience of being arrested.

When you observe police remember that you don't want to make the cop more nervous than they already are. Keep your hands visible at all times. Don't approach an officer from behind or stand behind them. Don't make any sudden movements or raise your voice to the cop. Try to keep the situation calm. You don't want to get the person in more trouble. If an officer tells you to step back, tell the officer that YOU DO NOT WANT TO INTERFERE, YOU SIMPLY WISH TO OBSERVE.

More Assertive Style:

Ask victim if they know why they are being arrested or detained.
Get the badge number. Ask the cop if you can't see it.
If the stop is vague, ask the cop to name the Penal Code Section that they are enforcing.
Have educational conversations with people standing around.
Don't piss the cop off if you can help it. Don't let it get personal.
Negotiate the situation. If possible get a phone card (know your rights) to the victim
Identify yourself as `COPWATCH'.
Try to stay until the stop is concluded. Remember that Rodney King was just a traffic stop originally.

If the person wants to take action, give them complaint forms or refer them to CW office.

Principles: Non-violence

Be polite to everyone you meet including the police.
Don’t insult or incite them. This is counterproductive.
Don’t carry anything illegal or give cops an opportunity to bust you for non-COPWATCH activity.
Of course no weapons, knives, drugs, etc. Do not COPWATCH if you have had alcohol.
Don’t yell. Speak in a calm, audible voice.
Avoid quick or sudden movements when you are around cops.
Don’t run to a scene. Walk. Remain visible to the officer at all times.
Keep your hands visible at all times, too.
Do not use flash cameras or video lighting when officers are engaging in a routine stop of someone.
If a stop escalates into unnecessary use of force use whatever tools at your disposal to record and document the situation.
Don’t assume who is right and who is wrong. Observe and document before taking action.
Try to be helpful to the citizen being stopped without making his/her situation worse. Our goal is to lessen the incidents of harassment and violence, not escalate them.

Be Careful of:

Don’t inadvertently collaborate in a crime (don’t become a look-out, warning if police are coming, etc.)

Don’t let people use COPWATCH name to shied illegal stuff.

You may get arrested at times, but if you are doing good COPWATCHING the organization will support you.

Talking to cops is a bad idea. It can undermine your credibility with the community as well as giving the police information about you and the group.

Taking pictures or videotaping can be a problem if the detainee doesn't want you to. Respect them. Tell them that you are working to stop police misconduct. If this doesn't satisfy them, turn off the camera.

Remember that you are representing COPWATCH with every act and every word.

Those that come after you will have an easier time if you do your job well.

Don't make promises that you/we can't keep. Don't tell people that we will get them a lawyer, take the cops to court, etc. Tell people that we will work with them to get justice. Invite them to a meeting.

Don't be afraid to say "I don't know" if you are asked legal questions. Better that than giving out wrong information.

End Shift

Return completed incident reports to the office. Be sure that they are legible and that you put your name on it in case office people need to do follow-up. Check the weekly COPWATCH shift log and sign it. Return scanner and any other equipment to the office for the next COPWATCHers to use. Please check the equipment and note if anything is wrong with it.

Watching Cops

Cops Stop Someone

Write down officer name, badge number, car license number.
Write down the time, place and date of incident Determine if person is being arrested and if so on what charge.
Get names of witnesses to the arrest/harassment and how to contact them.
Try to get the name of arrestee, but don’t ask their name unless they have already given it to the police.
If necessary or possible, photograph and/or record incident on tape.
Fill out incident form completely.

Cop Violence

Same as above
Attempt to gather witnesses to the incident by explaining to bystanders what is happening.
Encourage cops to be calm and non-violent
Call 911.
In this way, the incident will be recorded at the police communication center.

In Case of Arrest

If you are arrested, the police must tell you why you are being arrested. Also, be sure to get the badge number of the officer who is arresting you. You have the right to remain silent. In fact, it is probably a good idea not to talk to the officer. If you are in custody, the police may not question you about any offense they think you have committed without first reading you your rights., including the right to remain silent and the right to have an attorney present before you are questioned. The court must provide you with a lawyer if you can't afford one. You have the right to speak to a lawyer before arraignment. If you are arrested, you may be searched without your permission. As soon as possible, and in no case later than three hours after booking, you have the right to three phone calls: to a friend or relative, to a lawyer and to a bail bondsman.

If Someone Else is Arrested

Find out where they are being held, what the charges are and how much bail is.

Technical Support

Police Scanner

The scanner is a portable radio that is used to monitor police radio communications. There are 100 channels in the scanner, each tuned to a frequency used by either UC or Berkeley police. The scanner controls that a COPWATCHer may want to use are described here:

VOLUME: This knob is on the top of the scanner that adjusts the volume coming out of the speaker or headphone. It also turns off the scanner so remember this when you are finishing your shift.

SQUELCH: This knob, right next to the volume knob, is adjusted to cut out the static between messages. Its like the mute button on an FM tuner.

MANUEL/SCAN: These are two buttons on the front of the scanner. When the scanner is first turned on, it is in scan mode, meaning that it flips through all 100 channels repeatedly until it comes to a channel being used. It will monitor this channel until the transmission is ended and then resume scanning the 100 channels. Sometimes, you might want to stay on just one channel to monitor an important exchange. To do this, press the MANUAL button. The scanner will stay on the current channel. Every time you press the MANUAL button, you go up one channel. Pressing the SCAN button resumes scanning.

When using the scanner, you are basically listening for locations. You want to find out WHERE to go to observe the police. Don't be distracted by all of the other conversation happening on the scanner. Also, in recent years, the police have reduced their use of radios and rely more on cell phones and computer terminals in their cars. Don't worry if you aren't hearing much. There might not be much going on.

If the scanner starts to act funny, the batteries are probably going dead. It uses four AA batteries. If you have to buy batteries while on shift, save you receipt so that we can reimburse you later.

Also, try to be discreet when using the scanner. It can easily make people on the street think that you are a cop or are working in some official capacity for the state. Keep it in your backpack and use it like you would a walkman.

Police Radio “10” Codes for Berkeley, CA. (May be similar in other cities)

Ten-1 msg not understood	Ten-18 urgent
Ten-2 signal is good	Ten-19 contact________
Ten-3 stop transmitting	Ten-20 unit location
Ten-4 msg received (OK)	Ten-21 call by phone
Ten-5 relay info to __________	Ten-22 cancel last message
Ten-6 station is busy	Ten-23 arrived at scene
Ten-7 out of service	Ten-24 assignment completed
Ten-8 in service	Ten-25 meet ____________
Ten-9 repeat last message	Ten-26 est. time of arrival is ________
Ten-10 Negative (“No”)	Ten-27 req. for info. on license
Ten-11 ________in service	Ten-28 req. vehicle reg. Info
Ten-12 stand by	Ten-29 check records
Ten-13 report_________conditions	Ten-30 use caution
Ten-14 information	Ten-31 pick up
Ten-15 msg. Delivered	Ten-32 units requested
Ten-16 reply to msg	Ten-33 emergency! Help needed
Ten-17 en route	Ten-34 correct time

Video Camera

COPWATCH has a 8mm video camcorder which is a very powerful tool for documenting police abuses. Its operation is very simple, but the importance of thinking about what you are taping can't be stressed enough. This handbook can't teach you how to be a skilled videographer, but here are some points to keep in mind when filming:

Keep the strap around your neck when you are filming for safety's sake
Don't film people who obviously don't want to be filmed
Don't film criminal conduct if you see any. Focus on the police.
When you are done using the camera, take the battery out so that it doesn't run down.
When you film, try not to record yourself getting into arguments with the police. It is very frustrating when we have good footage of an event but a hostile commentary from the videographer. Try to let the situation speak for itself. Let your partner do the talking if it is necessary.
Be sure to press the button which gives the date and time on the screen
If you do film anything significant please transfer the footage to VHS tape and label it properly. If you can't do this then tell someone in COPWATCH who can.
Don't let that sun shine directly into the lens. Don't put the camera at undue risk of being confiscated. Back off if necessary.

http://copwatch.home.sprynet.com/cwindex.htm

Earth First!

Why Earth First!?

Are you tired of namby-pamby environmental groups? Are you tired of overpaid corporate environmentalists who suck up to bureaucrats and industry? Have you become disempowered by the reductionist approach of environmental professionals and scientists?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then Earth First! is for you. Earth First! is effective. Our front-line, direct action approach to protecting wilderness gets results. We have succeeded in cases where other environmental groups had given up, and have drawn public attention to the crises facing the natural world.

Earth First! was founded in 1979 in response to a lethargic, compromising, and increasingly corporate environmental community. Earth First! takes a decidedly different tack towards environmental issues. We believe in using all the tools in the tool box, ranging from grassroots organizing and involvement in the legal process to civil disobedience and monkeywrenching.

Earth First! is different from other environmental groups. Here are some things to keep in mind about Earth First! and some suggestions for being an active and effective Earth First!er: First of all, Earth First! is not an organization, but a movement. There are no "members" of Earth First!, only Earth First!ers. It is a belief in biocentrism, that life of the Earth comes first, and a practice of putting our beliefs into action.

While there is broad diversity within Earth First! from animal rights vegans to wilderness hunting guides, from monkeywrenchers to careful followers of Gandhi, from whiskey-drinking backwoods riffraff to thoughtful philosophers, from misanthropes to humanists there is agreement on one thing, the need for action!

How to form an EF! Group

Earth First! is an international movement composed of small, bioregionally-based groups. Earth First!ers (EF!ers) take it upon ourselves to become intimately familiar with the ecology of our area and the most immediate and serious threats to it. We apply "direct pressure" to stop the bleeding, with a combination of
education, litigation, and creative civil disobedience. Many EF!ers experience both the joy of the wild and the anguish of losing it so acutely that they feel isolated and alone before coming together as a group. Nothing is more empowering or more fulfilling than standing defiant in creative consort with other like-hearted people. Dare to love that much!

Earth First! has survived attacks by moderates, would-be leaders and the agents of the system, remaining the most diverse, passionate, committed, and uncompromising group of environmental activists. Our direct actions in defense of the last wild places only seem radical compared to an entire paradigm of denial and control, where the individual is convinced they are powerless, and the organizations set up to protect the wilderness continue to bargain it away.

Earth First! is a priority, not an organization. It is the name of our journal, and the slogan of our emerging tribe, but it is a tribe without chiefs. The only "leaders" are those temporarily working the hardest and taking the most risks. New ideas, strategies and crucial initiative come from individuals, and all decisions are made within affinity groups based on preferred tactics. EF! is as much an extended family as an environmental movement, developing the integrity and skills for a new/old way of living with the land. Our actions are tied to Deep Ecology, the spiritual and visceral recognition of the intrinsic, sacred value of every living thing.

To start an Earth First! group in your area, consider the following elements: Contacts: Even though it is up to every individual EF!er to come up with campaigns and strategies and carry them out, a successful group still needs a "contact" to:

Establish a mailing address and phone for the group so that anyone may get in touch.
Maintain a mailing list and a phone tree, to help instigate actions, or to make urgent announcements.

Contacts are listed in the EF! Journal. To avoid any confusion or loss of momentum should some key motivator leave, it is best to have several committed contacts, (two names, one shared PO Box).

A Mailing List & Phone Tree

These are essential for keeping everyone in touch. Begin with friends who you know share your biocentric enthusiasm. Put out sign-up sheets at all the environmental concerts, speeches, etc. that you put on, as well as asking to do the same at other related events (Native American, anti-nuke, music, etc.). Put out an information table in front of student unions and natural food stores, with stand-up graphic displays on your campaigns and a sign-up sheet. Try doing a one-time only insert in related alternative publications calling for participation.

NOTE: Make sure it is clear to everyone putting their name on this list that it is a list for potential activists, not just a mailing list for free newsletters.

This list should include space for addresses for mailings, phone numbers for quick access, and notes on their skills (enjoys making costumes, good with signs and graphics, willing to work on timber appeals, computer literate, committed to civil disobedience, etc.)

Money

Unlike most other environmental groups which require an immense budget to do their work, Earth First! campaigns are pulled off on a shoestring. The major expenses for an Earth First! group are printing, postage, and the occasional costs associated with planning and staging actions and demonstrations, and, if arrests are made, legal costs and court fines.

An EF! Bank Account

Setting up your own bank account and doing local fundraising are essential parts of being a contact. More than one person in your group should be allowed to sign checks. This allows for fair and open accounting of the scant funds going through it. As these funds are used entirely for lawful (but radical!) purposes, the resulting records are no threat to the signatories. Remember that civil disobedience is constitutionally protected free speech, and that any expenses incurred during EF! actions are lawful.

Fundraising

In a capitalist world, there's capital to be had. If you put your mind to it, you can pile it up by the boatload. Try these handy methods:

Benefit concerts, slide-shows, tabling
Disgusting pleas for money in various newsletters
Annual auctions of donated goodies and services
Grants from foundations for specific projects
School money funneled through campus clubs for EF! presentations
EF! work parties
Profits on the sale of EF! t-shirts (available from the Journal)
Sale of EF! Journals

Campaigns

These can include everything presently impacting biodiversity on this planet. Old-growth forest protection, endangered species, species reintroduction, habitat destruction, disastrous public lands grazing, damming of rivers, and the re-wilding of the East and West Coast states. To really protect a bioregion, we have to become natives, indigenous, connected through guts and soul. To really become acquainted with that which we fight for, we need to spend a lot of time intimately exploring our deserts and canyons, mapping the ancient forests, documenting the existence of endangered and threatened species, and just feeling. EF! coordinates actions nationally as well, such as the countrywide demonstrations against Burger King (which stopped its importation of Costa Rican rainforest beef), the annual "Day of Outrage" against the US Forest Service, campaigns on predator control and other issues such as the Hydro-Quebec's ongoing river destruction projects.

Meetings

It's true. Meetings are the bane of civilization, the low benchmark for all environmental "organizations." But EF! does it differently. Call them parties with a focus! We gather for potlucks, ceremonial sweats, hikes-climbs-swims-floats. Yet we meet for one purpose only: the ACTIONS that follow!

Tactics

EF! is open to all forms of non-violent direct action. What we share is an undiluted passion, a belief in the sacred intrinsic value of all life, and a willingness to ACT! Although known through the sensationalist media for our arrest scenarios and advocacy of ecotage, EF! activists use all of the following tactics, and more:

Education, informational handouts, press releases, articles in periodicals, presentations to elementary schools and universities, going to Forest Service meetings to fill them in on their own data, radio interviews.
Public input, letter-writing (so we don't lose one by default), petitions, testifying at hearings, etc.
Litigation, timber-sale appeals, requests for restraining orders, lawsuits based on the Clean Air/ Clean
Water/ Endangered Species Acts.

Demonstrations and Civil Disobedience

These are what got women the vote, African-Americans their civil rights, and the US military-industrial machine out of Vietnam (next, we need to get it out of North America!). The quickest and surest way to get a new EF! group going is to immediately do a fun, nervy action! Show how much you care about issues the media would never write about, and end up on the opinion-changing front cover as a result of creative, confrontational and colorful demos.

Spreading the Word

The EF! Journal is the voice for the many diverse opinions of our movement. It is the primary source for articles on the threats to wilderness and our effort to save it. This is your journal. It is no better than you make it. All groups are encouraged to submit pieces on campaigns, philosophy, biodiversity and tactics based on deep ecology and uncompromising wilderness defense. The Journal is put out by a long-term editorial staff of four and several short-termers; any earnest EF! activist can work for an issue or two as a short termer.

If you do an action, write it up; your action articles will almost certainly be printed in the Journal, so make them exciting, stress campaign background, details of the threat, reason for the choice of target, tactics, results, and ways for the reader to get involved (letters to Congress, coordinated actions in their own town, calls for activists to come join you there.) Include lots of good photos (preferably B&W), maps, and graphics.

Free Journal copies are traditionally mailed out to contacts to be sold at full cover cost as a fund-raiser for local groups. Consider consigning them for a small commission to newsstands, campus bookstores, natural food stores, etc.

Individual EF!ers are expected to subscribe, since the Journal depends on subs to survive.

A regional newsletter can augment rather than replace the national Journal, and can focus in greater detail on local issues, lists of local events or demonstrations, more leeway to fit poetry in, etc. These can be statewide newsletters, bioregional (portions of more than one state), or specific to your community. They can be copied and stapled, and sent out without wasteful envelopes. Production, writing, and mailing should be done as a group, to get the maximum number of voices represented, and keep all the work from falling on just a few.

http://www.earthfisrt.org
http://www.earthfirstjournal.org
http://www.efmedia.org/

ACT UP
How do we start an ACT UP chapter?

Answer: Just do it!

ACT UP chapters begin when a group of people in a city or region get together and form a group called ACT_UP/... (like ACT UP/New York, ACT UP/Golden Gate, ACT UP/Paris). Each chapter makes its own logo. Many use the standard one and add their own locality name below.

Ways to start a chapter are to put an announcement in a community paper, wheatpaste announcements, or word of mouth that a chapter is forming. At the first meeting talk about what projects you want to work on, what kind of structure you want to use, etc. It is best if the meeting is in a public place that is easily accessible by wheelchairs.

For examples of how ACT UP/NY is organized and useful direct action manuals, go to the documents section (http://www.actupny.org/documents/documents.html).
Download and distribute these documents!
See also: Media Training Seminar (http://www.actupny.org/reports/Media%20Training.html)

When you're sure that you really have a viable chapter, send a note to the ACT UP Network, currently organized by ACT UP/Philadelphia, and tell them so that you can be included in any network communications.

The ACT UP Network is not an administrative body. Each chapter operates autonomously. ACT UP/New York may be the first chapter, but it is not the "head" chapter.

While there is no means test, there are certain qualities that characterize an ACT UP chapter (using New York as an example).

ACT UP is a democratic, open group. We have no paid positions and no "president" - just rotating, elected meeting facilitators, treasurers, etc. All financial decisions involving more than $100 dollars, the use of the ACT UP name or logo must be authorized by a majority vote of the membership at one of the open, publicly advertised Monday night general meetings. Sometimes this means meetings are fractious, but a little drama is a good work-out!

ACT UP is committed to direct action as a means of ending the AIDS crisis. There are many activities surrounding AIDS. ACT UP does not do all of them. We are not a service provider; we do not provide medical treatment to individuals. While we meet with government and health officials to advocate for people with HIV and AIDS, we differ from typical lobby groups by our use of direct action, which ranges from street demos to acts of civil disobedience. AIDS is a medical emergency, but it is foremost a political crisis.

ACT UP is not a gay rights group. We are a coalition of diverse individuals united in anger and committed to direct action to end the AIDS crisis. While the AIDS crisis is inextricably linked to homophobia (along with other modes of oppression) and a large number of our members come from the lesbian/gay/bi/trans communities, ACT_UP is about fighting AIDS. Often this works in conjunction with queer liberation, but our primary focus is the fight against AIDS.

All the above, and even everything in the documents section, are far too little information. We will do everything we can to help inform and prepare you, but there is no substitute for the education gained in the process of doing action.
http://www.actupny.org
http://www.actupsf.com/

Reclaim The Streets

Ultimately it is in the streets that power must be dissolved: for the streets where daily life is endured, suffered and eroded, and where power is confronted and fought, must be turned into the domain where daily life is enjoyed, created and nourished.

The street is an extremely important symbol because your whole enculturation experience is geared around keeping you out of the street... The idea is to keep everyone indoors. So, when you come to challenge the powers that be, inevitably you find yourself on the curbstone of indifference, wondering "should I play it safe and stay on the sidewalks, or should I go into the street?" And it is the ones who are taking the most risks that will ultimately effect the change in society

The street, at best, is a living place of human movement and social intercourse, of freedom and spontaneity. The car system steals the street from under us and sells it back for the price of petrol. It privileges time over space, corrupting and reducing both to an obsession with speed or, in economic lingo, "turnover". It doesn't matter who "drives" this system for its movements are already pre-determined.

The privatization of public space in the form of the car continues the erosion of neighborhood and community that defines the metropolis. Road schemes, business "parks", shopping developments - all add to the disintegration of community and the flattening of a locality. Everywhere becomes the same as everywhere else. Community becomes commodity - a shopping village, sedated and under constant surveillance. The desire for community is then fulfilled elsewhere, through spectacle, sold to us in simulated form. A TV soap "street" or "square" mimicking the arena that concrete and capitalism are destroying. The real street, in this scenario, is sterile. A place to move through not to be in. It exists only as an aid to somewhere else - through a shop window, billboard or petrol tank.

Above all, never make transportation an issue by itself. Always connect it to the problems of the city, of the social division of labor, and to the way this compartmentalizes the many dimensions of life.

One place for work, another for "living," a third for shopping, a fourth for learning, a fifth for entertainment. The way our space is arranged carries on the disintegration of people that begins with the division of labor in the factory. It cuts a person into slices, it cuts our time, our life, into separate slices so that in each one you are a passive consumer at the mercy of the merchants, so that it never occurs to you that work, culture, communication, pleasure, satisfaction of needs, and personal life can and should be one and the same thing: a unified life, sustained by the social fabric of the community.

Won't the streets be better without cars? Not if all that replaces them are aisles of pedestrianized consumption or shopping "villages" safely protected from the elements. To be against the car for its own sake is inane; claiming one piece as the whole jigsaw.

The struggle for car-free space must not be separated from the struggle against global capitalism - for in truth the former is encapsulated in the latter. The streets are as full of capitalism as of cars and the pollution of capitalism is much more insidious.

At first the people stop and overturn the vehicles in their path... they are avenging themselves on the traffic by decomposing it into its inert original elements.

Next they incorporate the wreckage they have created into their rising barricades: they are recombining the isolated inanimate elements into vital new artistic and political forms. For one luminous moment, the multitudes of solitudes that make the modern city come together in a new kind of encounter, to make a people.

The streets belong to the people: they seize control of the city's elemental matter and make it their own.

We are about taking back public space from the enclosed private arena. At its simplest this is an attack on cars as a principal agent of enclosure.

It's about reclaiming the streets as public inclusive space from the private exclusive use of the car. But we believe in this as a broader principle, taking back those things which have been enclosed within capitalist circulation and returning them to collective use as a commons.

http://www.reclaimthestreets.net/

Fundraising and Non-Profit Organizations

Fundraising Activities

General Considerations

(1) Be as open as possible about your group's finances. Have monthly expenses and donations posted where everyone can see them. Announce donations and expenses at meetings. People in your group are more likely to help raise money if they have an accurate idea of the health of your group.

(2) It's a good idea to do the same events repeatedly. It's easier to plan and execute fundraisers that you've previously done. When you do an event for the third or fourth time you have a pretty good idea how much you're going to make, what to do, who to contact, etc. It's far easier to spread responsibility around evenly after you've done an event a few times.

(3) Don't rely on one event to make you tons of money. Do lots of events and be conservative in your estimates of what you'll make.

(4) Keep your costs low. Nothing debilitates a group like losing money on an event.

(5) Consider teaming up with other groups. Working with others can expand your social networks, reduce your workload, allow you access to new resources, etc.

(6) Politicize your events. Lots of groups get sick of fundraising because it takes time away from activism. To counter this you can have speakers, set up literature tables, announce direct actions, etc.

(7) Form a temporary collective (disintegrating task force) to carry out the event. Spread responsibility around. Share knowledge so that everyone in your organization can plan benefits.

(8) Figure out a target audience for the benefit (vegetarians, teenage punks, anarchists, environmentalists, etc.).

(9) Plan stuff way in advance. Pay attention to detail. If you're going to do all the hard work required by most benefits you should do all the easy stuff like putting up

fliers. Call DJs at college and community stations. Get the event into newsletters, zines, tabloids, etc. Ask everyone in your group to call 10 friends not involved with your project.

(10) Have fun!!!

Stuff We're Doing

Pledges: Theoretically, the easiest way to keep various projects afloat is through small monthly pledges from those involved. Regular donations of ten to thirty dollars could minimize or alleviate the need for most fund raising (or allow the money to go into real projects instead of just survival). Most fund raising yields a VERY LOW payoff relative to the amount of time put into it. But, because our projects are often populated with people who have more time than money and because fund raising can be fun and good outreach, the pledge system does not work as well as it could.

Auto-Deposit Programs: Most Banks have an Auto-Deposit (AD) program set up for churches, etc. ADs take money out of an individual's account and transfer into your group's account each month. We currently receive one hundred dollars a month from Ads and we have been promised completed forms by some older anarchists in the area.

Subletting: If you have a space you have a valuable resource that can generate money for your projects. Offering rehearsal space to bands at a price below the market is a great arrangement for both parties. We receive $75 a month plus use of a sound system for shows from a band that rehearses early in the morning (3am-6pm). Other spaces in the US have rented space for living, office space to well-funded radical/progressive groups, etc. You can also rent your space to people doing shows/raves/etc. and let them handle everything.

Collective Wage Slavery: Everyone go and do short-term odd jobs, weird opportunities for money exist in all cities, just keep your ears open and use your imagination.

Canvassing: We have never tried this, but from experiences with other groups I can attest that this is a good outreach/money maker. If you can get five or ten people to canvass for a few hours you can make a lot of money. To get started you might:

(1) Get a license from the city (or not).

(2) Come up with a rap to lay on the people whose houses you invade: "I'm from the A-Zone. We work on... here's some literature... $$$.

(3) Get a clipboard.

(4) Pick a neighborhood and get busy.

Many will make a donation to get rid of you. Some will give money because they support you and most people will give you nothing. When I was in high school I canvassed for a progressive environmental outfit called Ohio Citizen Action//Toxic Watch. I was horrible. In a six hour day I usually raised only $50, mostly from people who talked to me about other things and then gave me $10 to be nice. Good canvassers were pulling in $200+ in six hours. If you can get 10 people to canvass for a day or two you'll make tons of money.

Have a Plasma Drive: Or take part in some lame experiment. I've tested antacids, done stuff in the education college, been on mock juries, etc. There is big money for this stuff.

Music Benefit: I imagine everyone is familiar with this type of fund raising so I'll be brief. We do benefits at bars on Sundays. We usually raise between $250-$1000 per shot. I feel it's better to do lots of little shows instead of putting tons of time into one big show. Four bands for $3-$6 is easy to set up. One of the best times to do shows is on the Sundays before holidays. Usually there's nothing going on, but people want a diversion. We do shows on the Sunday before every holiday. Get the bars to do publicity for you. Ads in music magazines really help. We occasionally do all-day festivals at a Unitarian Church with workshops, music, food, games, drumming, etc. This is a good way to make money and get people interested. Always let the owner offer the terms. If their offer sucks you can always turn it down. Many times we've set the terms and have been stuck with just the money from the door when we could have gotten a percentage of the money from the alcohol our friends consumed.

Dinner Benefit: If you have access to a commercial kitchen and a big dining hall, you might consider putting on a dinner for the vegetarian crowd. Warning: these types of dinners are an enormous amount of work for the money you'll raise, but the work can be made fun. Hint: don't spend a lot on ingredients. If you don't have access to a large space, you can have a dinner at someone's house and charge $5 or whatever.

Coupons: One idea we are about to try with an independent record store is circulating coupons for them. If people make a purchase with coupons circulated by the A-Zone we get a donation. Here's how it works: normally the record store has $3 off coupons. We will be spreading $2 off coupons. Each time a purchase is made the customer gets $2 off, we get $1 and the record store gets the same amount of money as if the person had used a $3 off coupon.

Anything-a-thon: We did a bowl-a-thon which was a modest success. These kinds of events are cool if you get widespread participation from your group. Otherwise they suck. For some reason people are willing to give money if you're doing something cheesy like bowling.

Rummage Sales: These are easy and fairly lucrative.

Bake Sales: Usually these are not worth the trouble, but we use them to lure sugar fiends to our literature tables.

Selling Other Stuff: T-shirts, manic panic (hair dye), stickers, etc. Manic Panic = $3/bottle in bulk, $9-$12 retail. Get the address off a bottle. (Emma Center did this for a while).

Miscellaneous: Our big project for 1996 is an Ani DiFranco show that we have tentatively booked with her agent (if Ani approves we'll do the show). We got her agent to cut her fee from $10000 to $2000 plus 15% (after we recover our costs). We have already received tremendous support from the feminist community. The women's studies department at the University of Toledo has gotten us the Student Union Auditorium for free. If we get this show we figure we'll make between $5000-$7000 which we'll put towards buying a permanent anarchist center in Toledo.

Speaking: If you know people involved at a college get them to set up a paid speaking engagement for your group.

[From Fundraising by Mike Szuberla http://messmedia.rootmedia.org/disconnection/archives/issue4/4funding.htm]

Grant Proposal Writing and Foundation Funding

10-Point Plan for Standard Grant Funding Proposal

1. Prove that you have a significant need or problem in your proposal.

2. Deliver an answer to the need, or solution to the problem, based on experience, ability, and imagination throughout your proposal.

3. Reflect planning, research and vision throughout your proposal.

4. Research grantsmakers, the funders providing grants, the types of funds the grantsmakers award, and the types of grantseekers the grantsmakers award funds to.

5. Determine whether the grantsmakers and funders goals and objectives for grantmaking match your grantseeking.

6. Target your proposal to grantmakers appropriate to your field and project.

7. Contact the grantmaker to determine specific grantmaking guidelines.

8. Present the proposal in the appropriate and complete format, and include all required attachments.

9. State clearly and concisely the community's and organization's needs and objectives. Write well; use proper grammar and correct spelling. Prepare an interesting, unique proposal.

10. Always cover the following important criteria: project purpose, feasibility, community need, applicant accountability and competence.

11. State project logic, probable impact, money needed, and demonstrate community support.

12. Unless specifically requested by the grantmaker, omit the following unimportant criteria which can detract from the proposal: working relationships, advocates, minority status, social acceptability, prior funding, and influence of others.

[From http://www.npguides.org/grant/index.html]

* * *

The Ten Most Common Reasons Grants are Declined

1. "The organization does not meet our priorities."

Research thoroughly before applying.

2. "The organization is not located in our geographic area of funding."

Get the guidelines before applying, or at least check GrantSeeker.com or your grants guide.

3. "The proposal does not follow our prescribed format."

Read the application information very carefully and follow it exactly.

4. "The proposal is poorly written and difficult to understand."

Have friends and experienced people critique the grant before you submit it.

5. "The proposed budget/grant request is not within our funding range."

Look at average size of grants of the funder.

6. "We don't know these people. Are they credible?"

Set up an interview before submitting the proposal and have board members and other funded organizations help you establish a relationship and give you credibility.

7. "The proposal doesn't seem urgent. I'm not sure it'll have an impact."

Study the priorities and have a skilled writer do this section to make it "grab" the funder. Your aim is to sound urgent, but not in crisis.

8. "The objectives and plan of action of the project greatly exceed the budget and timelines for implementation."

Be realistic about the programs and budgets. Only promise what can realistically be delivered for the amount requested.

9. "We've allocated all the money for this grant cycle."

Don't take this personally. It is a fact of life. Try the next grant cycle. Next time, submit at least a month before the deadline to give ample opportunity for questions and a site visit.

10. "There is not enough evidence that the program will become self-sufficient and sustain itself after the grant is completed."

Add a section to the proposal on your plans for self-sufficiency and develop a long-term strategy.

[Adapted from California Grants Guide, Grant Guides Plus, 2000.]

Starting an unincorporated association or non-profit

What is an Unincorporated Association?

A non-profit unincorporated association is any grouping of persons (i.e. a collective, an activist organization, etc.) uniting together for some special purpose or business other than making a profit. Most states will grant tax-exempt status to an unincorporated association or club, you will have to contact your state government to get information about applying for it. However, if you just take out a non-interest bearing account at a bank or credit union (i.e. a checking account) you will not have to file taxes for your association and, therefore, you can avoid dealing with the government at all. The main differences between an unincorporated association and a non-profit corporation is that the members of an unincorporated association can be held directly liable if someone were to sue the association and it is problematic for unincorporated associations to have paid employees.

In contrast, non-profit corporations, in just about every sense, are corporations, with the exception of making a profit and have the legal protection of limited liability, which protects the corporation's directors from being held legally responsible for any legal action directed at the corporation itself.

Five alternatives to starting a nonprofit

1. Study the list of nonprofits already active in the same area and join their efforts as a volunteer, a board member or even as staff.

2. Analyze the list of nonprofits already active in the same area, identify the three most
compatible with your ideas, and meet with them to explore creating a special project or initiative -- and negotiate your involvement.

3. Explore the list of national organizations in the area of your interest, and see if a local chapter is needed in your geographic area.

4. If your effort will be quite local and small, consider forming an unincorporated association or club -- have meetings and activities but skip the reporting requirements (an option for groups with annual budgets under $25,000).

5. If you are considering creation of a group to finance activities or needs of others (scholarships, family emergency funds for a specific population, etc.), explore sponsorship of the fund by a community foundation or other organization.

[From http://www.delawarenonprofit.org/StartUpFaqB.htm]

Steps to Forming a Non-Profit Organization in the US

1. Determine the purpose of the organization. Every organization should develop a mission statement that describes their reason for existing. This can be developed by meeting with potential clients, constituents, board members and other interested parties.

2. Determine the structure of the organization. This stage should include determining the type of organization that you will form (e.g., a charitable corporation under § 501 (c)(3) or another kind of non-profit: member or not, corporation or unincorporated, association, or trust). Do you want to be a membership organization or governed by a board of directors who elect their own successors? What interests or constituencies should be on the Board?

3. Choose your board of directors. Unfortunately an incorporated non-profit organization must legally have a board of directors in most states. Most state law requires that every non-profit corporation have a President, Treasurer, and Secretary (i.e. officers who perform comparable duties), also most states allow a single person may hold all three offices.

4. Write bylaws. Your bylaws will guide your organization's day to day operations. These should be drafted carefully and may require the assistance of an attorney experienced in nonprofit law.

5. File Articles of Incorporation the state you wish your organization to be incorporated in. For organizations that plan to be incorporated, this is a key step. If you expect to seek exemption as a charitable organization under Section 501 (c)(3), be sure to include the language required by the Internal Revenue Service.

6. Develop strategic and fundraising plans. A strategic plan will help you outline the steps needed to fulfill your organization's goals, determine your staff needs, and establish operational priorities for the upcoming year and beyond. The strategic plan should determine your budget priorities, identify potential donors, establish bookkeeping practices, and delineate fundraising activities (e.g., mailings, dinner-dance, silent auction, etc.).

7. Establish a system for record keeping and accounting. A protocol should be established for keeping all your organization's official records (such as board meeting minutes and financial reports) and records should be preserved for the life of the organization.

8. Obtain a Taxpayer Identification Number from the IRS. You'll need this number to open a bank account, file informational returns with the IRS and withhold your employees' income tax. You can obtain a Taxpayer Identification Number (also called an Employer Identification Number, EIN) by filling out an SS-4 form. Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-FORM or http://www.irs.ustreas.gov/bus_info/eo/index.html for an SS-4 form or more information. In most cases, you must also apply for tax-exempt status in the state you are incorporated in.

9. Request recognition of tax-exempt status from the IRS. Without a "determination letter" from the IRS, donors who want an income tax deduction may not make gifts to your charity. Nonprofit corporations that are charities and meet the definitions in IRC §501 (c)(3) may request recognition of their tax-exempt status. To receive §501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status from the IRS, you must fill out an IRS 1023 form and attach your proposed budget, Articles of Incorporation (certified), and bylaws (a true copy). Resumes of your board members are helpful as well. This application should be filed within the first 15 months of your organization's existence. Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-FORM or http://www.irs.ustreas.gov to receive a copy of this form. There are other non-profits that are not charities, such as Chambers of Commerce, etc. Different IRS forms are required for these.

10. Obtain a non-profit bulk mail permit from the U.S. Post Office. If your organization will be doing any large mailings, you may want to obtain an imprint authorization for bulk mailing. The permit provides a discount on the cost of mailing, if you are sending at least 200 pieces, and the

mailing is sorted and processed within the regulations of the Postal Service. There is a one-time imprint fee and the permits must be renewed annually. Certain nonprofit organizations may qualify for reduced rates. For more information on bulk mailing call, 1-800-238-3150 or visit the web site.

11. Register for unemployment compensation. All nonprofit organizations that have paid employees must participate in an unemployment compensation program in their states that they operate in.

12. Be sure to withhold employment taxes for the IRS. Employers are required to withhold their employees' wage income and FICA taxes and submit these to the IRS regularly. Failure to do so can result in significant fines and potential personal liability for the responsible officers. Contact the IRS at 1-800-829-3676 or www.irs.ustreas.gov to receive appropriate forms. The state and some local governments also require withholding.

13. Obtain liability insurance for your organization. Like for-profit business, non-profits are exposed tolegal risks. You should obtain general liability insurance, and possibly directors and officers liability insurance, and general professional liability coverage.

[Excerpted from "Tips on How to Become a Nonprofit Organization in Pennsylvania" http://www.pano.org/tipssuccess.htm]

References and Recommended Reading

Introduction to Anarchism

Books:

Noam Chomsky, Notes On Anarchism (Discussion Bulletin)
Daniel Guerin, Anarchism (Monthly Review)
Peter Kropotkin, Anarchism and Anarchist Communism (Freedom Press)
Donald Rooum, What Is Anarchism?: An Introduction (Freedom Press)

Websites:

The Anarchist FAQ
http://www.anarchistfaq.org/

Anarchy For Anybody
http://www.radio4all.org/anarchy/

Forms of Decision Making and Organization

Books:

A. Bauer, With The Peasants Of Aragon (Cienfuegos Press, 1982)
G. Leval, Collectives In The Spanish Revolution (Freedom Press, 1975)
S. Dolgoff, Workers Self-Management: Anarchist Collectives In The Spain, 1936-39 (Black Rose, 1990).
John Holloway, Elonia Pelaez (editors), Zapatista!: Reinventing Revolution in Mexico (Pluto Press, 1998)

George C Benello, From The Ground Up: Essays on Grassroots & Workplace Democracy (South End Press, 1992)

Websites:

"Parliament or democracy?", Workers Solidarity Movement Pamphlet
http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/once/pd_intro.html

Direct Democracy
http://www.directdemocracynow.org/

On Conflict and Consensus
http://www.consensus.net/

Communication

Books:

Media Alliance Publications
http://www.media-alliance.org/pubs/index.html

Center for Public Integrity, Citizen Muckraking: How to Investigate and Right Wrongs in Your Community (Common Courage Press)

Websites:

Wheat Pasting Made Fun and Simple
http://www.misterridiculous.com/diy/wheatpasting/

Guidelines for Tabling
http://www.ivu.org/vuna/guide/guidelinest.html

Red and Black Book Project
http://www.radio4all.org/redblack/

Public Speaking Tips
http://freenet.edmonton.ab.ca/toast/tips.html

The Virtual Activist
http://www.netaction.org/training/v-training.html

An activist guide to exploiting the Media
http://www.gn.apc.org/pmhp/gs/handbook/media.htm

Say it on the radio
http://www.ifas.org/fw/9703/guide.html

Organizing and Action

Books:

Rober Fisher, Let the People Decide: Neighborhood Organizing in America, Vol. 1 (Macmillan Library Reference)
Linda Jill Markowitz, Worker Activism after Successful Union Organizing (M. E. Sharpe, Inc.)
Martin Jay Levitt, Confessions of a union buster (Crown Publishers)

Websites:

Organizing Communities
http://www.spunk.org/texts/misc/sp001162.html

IWW Organizing Center
http://bari.iww.org/homesites/organize.html

Kensington Welfare Rights Union
http://www.kwru.org/

Lesbian Avenger Handbook
http://www.ncf.carleton.ca/ip/sigs/life/gay/lez/avenger

Tools for Organizers
http://www.casagordita.com/tools.htm

The Ruckus Society Training Manuals
http://ruckus.org/man/

Ozymandias' Sabotage Handbook
http://burn.ucsd.edu/~unalucha/sabotage1.htm

Encyclopedia of Direct Action
http://www.empowermentzone.com/dir_act.txt

The genetiX snowball Handbook for Action
http://www.gn.apc.org/pmhp/gs/handbook/

Direct Action Gets the Goods
http://ef.enviroweb.org/primer/DA.html

WOMBLES Homepage
http://www.wombleaction.mrnice.net/

Bodyhammer: protester self-defense
http://www.devo.com/sarin/shieldbook.pdf

Squat for Affordable Housing
http://www.cat.org.au/a4a/squat.html

Wise Fool Puppetry Handbook

http://www.zeitgeist.net/wfca/handbook.html

The Puppeteers' Cooperative Home Page
http://www.gis.net/~puppetco/index.html

Security, Protection, and Self-Defense

Books:

Joel Scambray, Stuart McClure, George Kurtz, Hacking Exposed (McGraw-Hill Professional Book Group)
Jack Luger, How to Use Mail Drops for Profit, Privacy, and Self-Protection (Loompanics Unlimited)

Websites:

TAO Security Homepage
http://security.tao.ca/

Clandestine
http://seussbeta.tripod.com/

COINTELPRO: The Danger we Face
http://www.radio4all.org/redblack/books/contelpro2.html

ALF Security Homepage
http://www.animalliberation.net/security/index.html

Guidelines, Strategy and Tactics for Legal Observers
http://www.infosubway.org/infosubway/wto/guides.html

Effective Videotaping Techniques for Legal Observers
http://www.infosubway.org/infosubway/wto/video.html

Rocky Mountain Survival Group First Aid Page
http://www.artrans.com/rmsg/medical/basic.htm

Black Cross Health Collective
http://www.blackcrosscollective.org/

Montreal Street Medics Urgence Manifs Montréal
http://montrealmedical.n3.net/

Healing Trauma for Activists
http://healingtrauma.protest.net/

Self-Defence
http://users.binary.net/thomcat/Selfd.html

Do You Need a Weapon?
http://www.defendu.com/wsdi/do_you_need_a_weapon.htm

Anarchist Projects

Books:

Gregory Macleod, From Mondragon to America: experiments in community economic development (Goose Lane Editions)
Michael Albert, Moving Forward (AK Press)
Janet Biehl, The politics of social ecology: libertarian municipalism (Black Rose Books)

Websites:

The Citizen's Handbook
http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/

(Dis)Connection Archive
http://messmedia.rootmedia.org/disconnection/archives/

The Freetown of Christiania
http://www.christiania.org/

Italy's Cultural Underground
http://www.altpr.org/apr14/social_centers.html

Squatters Handbook
http://www.squat.net/archiv/squatbook1/index.html

Your Friendly Neighborhood Infoshop
http://www.infoshop.org/texts/infoshop_chuck.html

Demise of the Beehive Collective: Infoshops Ain't the Revolution
http://www.infoshop.org/texts/demise.html

Radio Is My Bomb
http://www.roguecom.com/rogueradio/radioismybomb.html

Questions and Answers about Microradio
http://www.radio4all.org/q_and_a.html

Micropower Broadcasting - A Technical Primer
http://www.radio4all.org/how-to.html

Organizing a Tenants Association
http://www.tenant.net/Organize/

Beyond Squat or Rot : Anarchist Approaches to Housing
http://www.infoshop.org/PA/rot.html

Anarchist Communitarian Network
http://www.anarchistcommunitarian.net/

Food Not Bombs
http://www.foodnotbombs.net/bookindex.html

Homes Not Jails
http://www.homesnotjails.org/

Anti-Racist Action
http://www.web.net/~ara/who/network.htm

ACT UP
http://www.actupny.org/
http://www.actupsf.com/

Earth First!
http://www.earthfirst.org/
http://www.efmedia.org/

Reclaim the Streets
http://www.reclaimthestreets.net/

Fundraising and Non-Profit Organizations

Websites:

National Database of Non-Profit Organizations
http://www.guidestar.org/

Grants and Related Resources
http://www.lib.msu.edu/harris23/grants/4fcelec.htm

Five alternatives to starting a nonprofit http://www.delawarenonprofit.org/StartUpFaqB.htm

PANO's Tips on How to Become a Nonprofit Organization in Pennsylvania
http://www.pano.org/tipssuccess.htm