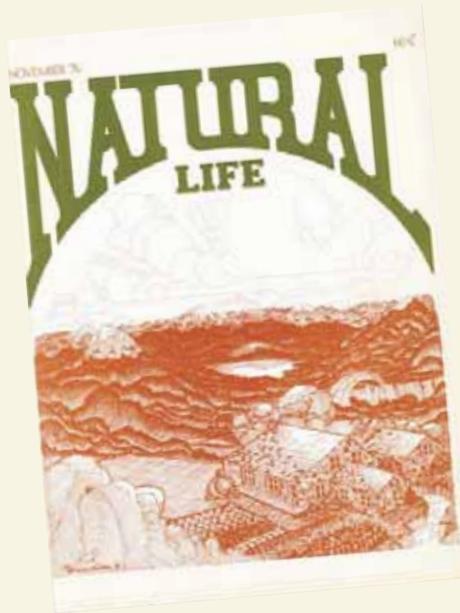


# The First 30 Years of Natural Life Magazine

The year 2006 marks the 30th anniversary of the launch of *Natural Life*. For the next six issues, we will bring you some of the highlights of three decades of publishing...from the days of black and white photos, typesetting and paste-up by hand, before personal computers and the Internet. Here is a selection of material from the first issue, published November, 1976.



Dear Readers:

*Natural Life* magazine was created to help provide the information that each of us needs to base our decisions on the day-to-day alternatives available to us. The more communication and interaction there is, the closer more of us can come to finding our own personal solutions to ensuring humanity's survival on this Earth.

We hope to show the natural alternatives which will provide the greatest chance for a peaceful co-existence. *Natural Life* will report on developments in the environmentally appropriate technologies; focus on the positive steps each of us can take to live as close to the natural life as possible; provide contact with people and organizations engaged in the search for the natural life; and serve as a medium for the exchange of views on how to attain a saner world in which to live.

The Alternate Press has built the fire, placed the pot and thrown in the first stone by publishing this magazine. It is now the communication and interaction among readers that will provide the nourishment for this soup.

We hope that you enjoy reading this first issue of *Natural Life* as much as we have enjoyed putting it together.

Rolf B. Priesnitz, Publisher  
October, 1976

## Celebrating Alternatives

One-quarter of the first issue of *Natural Life* was made up of coverage of the Down to Earth Festival, a celebration of alternatives held in a wind-battered field near Guelph, Ontario in the fall of 1976 (pictured right). Our friend and colleague Alan Jessop wandered the three-day "smorgasbord of alternatives", interviewing some of the 200-odd participants – everyone from representatives of Environment Canada to Pennsylvania-based Ontario Battery Services, the Solar Energy Society and both pro- and anti-nuclear organizations. Many fledgling groups were given a kick-start by both the Festival and being featured in the 46,000 copies of the first issue of *Natural Life* that were sent out free to potential subscribers (including the Cana-

dian readers of what was then called *Organic Gardening and Farming* magazine). Here are some interview excerpts:

### Peter McQueen

*the then-teenaged founder of Organic Gardeners and Farmers Association (now known as Canadian Organic Growers or COG)*

**Peter McQueen:** The Organic Gardeners and Farmers Association is, right now, based in Toronto, but we intend to branch out to other areas of Ontario.

NL: What exactly is the association doing?

**Peter McQueen:** We have a list of general aims written up and we are here to

aid and promote organic gardeners and farmers.

**NL:** Is it a promotional thing, a group of organic gardeners and farmers getting together to further the progress of organic gardening, then?

**Peter McQueen:** Yes, most of our members are organic gardeners, but we hope to have more organic farmers in the future. We've only been in existence since December, so we're still getting going.

**NL:** Have you learned anything from the Festival?

**Peter McQueen:** Well, I found out that there are a lot more groups existing than I thought there were in different areas. It's really encouraging to know that so many people are interested in alternatives. I'm surprised at the number of people expressing an interest in our area, in particular.

**NL:** Have there been any conventional farmers who have come forth expressing interest in organic farming?

**Peter McQueen:** No, not really.

## Dan Shatil

*representing the Solar Energy Society of Canada Incorporated (SESCI); Dan, who remained a friend of Natural Life and the Priesnitz family, died in 2004.*

**Dan Shatil:** The Society was formed in 1974 and our main offices are in Winnipeg but I'm representing the Toronto Chapter.

**NL:** What are the aims and objectives of the Association?

**Dan Shatil:** We have many objectives, one of which is the dissemination of information to the public – public education, in effect – and exchange of information among the members of the society. We're going to be lobbying the government in terms of providing incentive for the public to invest in alternative technology.

**NL:** How did you get involved? What's your background?

**Dan Shatil:** I'm an environmental planner with the Ministry of Environment in Ontario, working out of Toronto. This is not a government society, although many civil servants are involved. I'm originally from Israel so that I've been working with solar systems since the early 50s.

**NL:** Does the festival live up to your expectations?

**Dan Shatil:** They should be commended for bringing so many people together who are interested in alternative technology and alternative lifestyles. I think people should realize that the final answer or answers (because there's not just one answer, there are many of them) is a question of integrating much of the alternative technology together with social implications, psychological implications and otherwise. You see, technology is not going to resolve our social problems, and yet, if you are going to build a solar system or a solar house, if you are coming in with a social or psychological problem, [having the alternative technology] won't resolve it. It is a question of tackling all those problems simultaneously.



**NL:** Have you personally learned anything at this event that would be of value to you?

**Dan Shatil:** Just the experience of being with the people and finding that there are

so many beautiful people around with interests similar to mine. There are others I can learn from...because, in life, it is not enough to teach; you have to learn as well. It is an on-going process.



The tradition of presenting news items about renewable energy, natural health care and the environment began with the very first issue of *Natural Life*. We find it amazing how little has changed in 30 years.

## Utter Nonsense

In his uphill battle to halt further restrictions on agribusiness, US Agricultural Secretary Earl Butz denounced as “utter nonsense” a federal law banning cancer-causing additives from food, and said that poison – properly used – is good for people.

In a speech delivered at the Institute of Food Technologists in Anaheim, California, June 7, 1976, Butz illustrated his

point by noting that his doctor prescribes drugs that are deadly poisons but adds instructions “to tell me exactly how to use these poisons, and he says that if I do what he says, I'll get better. And you know what? He's right. I've always gotten better.

If food processing and additives have reduced the quality of the American diet, Butz went on to say, “How come each generation of children turns out to be taller than their parents?”

## Reality Check

Americans have stopped growing taller, according to a government-sponsored study released on June 9, 1976, by Dr. Peter V. Hammill. The study group, analyzing data on more than 200,000 children from infancy through adolescence, concluded that the trend toward ever bigger Americans has ceased.

Dr. Francis Johnston, a member of the study group, attributed the leveling off – after nearly a century of increases – to environmental factors, nutrition, water and lowered immunity to childhood diseases.

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