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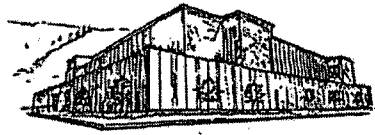
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**ALL GROWN UP: HOW THE COUNTERCULTURE
AFFECTED ITS FLOWER CHILDREN**

by

Eva P. Dunn-Froebig

B.A. St. Lawrence University, 1998

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

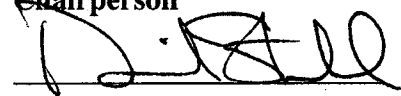
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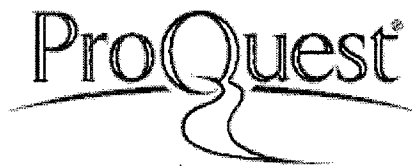


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This project is dedicated to my parents for raising me with counterculture values and to my son, Milo, for making me a better person.

The summer of 1969 foreshadowed my existence – even though I wasn't born for another seven years. That summer my dad quit his job as a camp counselor to sit in the mud and muck, and watch Janis Joplin, Jimi Hendrix, and Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young with half a million other hippies at the Woodstock Music and Art Fair. Around the same time my mother was sitting in a movie theater in London watching "Easy Rider." The scene where Peter Fonda throws his watch on the ground and takes off on his motorcycle struck her as freeing and completely different than her restricted upbringing. At 19, my mom had already dropped acid several times and she drank to escape her mother's stubborn upper-class attitudes. After the movie her girlfriend said, "We've got to go there."

"Yeah," Mom responded wistfully. Her girlfriend made the arrangements, and three years later mom had broken away from the rigid English class system she had grown to loathe, and moved to the United States, a land of opportunity and open spaces.

Meanwhile, Dad rebelled against his suburban, middle-class upbringing while attending the State University of New York in Oswego. He grew his thick, black hair down his back and tied a red bandana around his head as he made his mark as an environmental and political activist with an adventurous spirit. He buried a car in front of the administration building on the first Earth Day. After the Kent State shootings, he traveled by canoe from college to his parents' house in Long Island on a crusade for cleaner water. After graduating, Dad chose a self-sufficient lifestyle, living in a canvas tipi for two years through the harsh upstate New York winters. Like so many other members of the counterculture, my father was disillusioned by the Vietnam War and the values of the 1950s, and wanted to prove his self-reliance.

Mom's first years in the United States were spent married to a prolific artist who had skirted service in the Vietnam War by tricking the United States government into thinking he

was insane. They lived in various cities, working blue-collar jobs like gardening, driving a school bus, and delivering mail. Mom had earned an art degree back in England and eventually settled on making a living as a graphic designer in Syracuse, N.Y., but the marriage ended when Mom wanted to have kids and he didn't.

My parents met at a macrobiotic potluck in 1975, just a few days after Mom and her first husband separated. Mom said Dad looked American Indian with his dark skin and his long hair in two braids. Dad said Mom looked like a flower child with her long, flowing blonde hair and wispy dress. Within a few months they decided to have a child without getting married. That child was me.

As hippies began to settle down and start families, some moved to communes to live with like-minded people. Others sequestered themselves from society by participating in the back-to-the-land movement. My parents settled in an A-frame with no electricity or running water one mile from a rural road in upstate New York. Mom's viewing of "Easy Rider" seven years earlier stuck in her mind and she romanticized remote, simple living. Dad prided himself on being self-reliant, building the A-frame and working as an independent contractor.

The way I was raised has shaped who I am. I have grown to love the brown rice and tofu my mother fed me each day. The tipi my father gave me after my college graduation provided me with my first home and sparked an interest in American Indian culture. I prefer homeopathic remedies to Western medicine and I know the importance of breastfeeding my infant son. I'm a concerned participant in my community and my environment. I'm a well-rounded, confident woman with fond memories of my childhood.

Not all children of the counterculture have positive recollections about the way they were raised. But in spite of their experiences, children of the counterculture identify more with counterculture values than mainstream culture, Thomas Weisner, a professor of

psychiatry and anthropology at the University of California in Los Angeles, found during an 18-year study, which began in 1974. “It seems that many of these parents’ now young adult children share some of their values and commitments to experimentation, although in a form refracted through their own childhood and family experiences and reflecting the current economic, social and historical context at the end of the twentieth century,” Weisner wrote in an article in a 2001 article in *Ethos*, eight years after he completed the study.

The children of the counterculture in Weisner’s study who had negative outcomes did so because of their parents’ declining commitment to the counterculture and instability in their childhood – not because of so-called negative counterculture practices such as single parenthood by choice, unmarried couples choosing to raise children, experimental drug use, non-Western religion, and unconventional healthcare and diet. In fact, counterculture parents who remained committed to the movement produced offspring who did better in school than conventional children, had fewer behavior problems, and wanted to make a positive contribution to society, Weisner found.

Counterculture practices are more conventional now than they were in the 1970s, so it’s not clear whether these children chose their values based on the counterculture principles in which they were raised or because they were influenced by general societal trends. “Change in family life and child care certainly is driven by the political economy and demography, and by the social and cultural movements of every era... but these broad structural forces are also shaped and refracted by the power of intimate, everyday cultural scripts and routines of daily life,” Weisner concluded.

* * * * *

There’s no shortage of books, films, and even scholarly articles on the

counterculture movement. It was a popular social phenomenon in the 1960s and '70s, with many scholars enamored with the liberal, laid-back attitude of the movement. But little research and attention has been given to the children who were raised by counterculture parents. Weisner's research is the most complete compared to less than a dozen short-term studies of children raised in counterculture communes or unconventional environments. These studies and the following interviews with seven children of the counterculture will show how children raised in unconventional settings were affected by their parents' lifestyle and values. You will hear from seven individuals – interviewed in western Montana – who were raised in the counterculture.

Patrick Kahn was born in a school bus on the Farm, one of the most famous and well-organized counterculture communes. His parents moved to the Tennessee commune with founder Stephen Gaskin in 1971. The group was interested in being self-reliant with other like-minded people. But when the Farm struggled with bankruptcy and started charging monthly dues, Kahn's parents left and he adjusted to conventional high school in Missoula. Kahn, now 33, attended the University of Montana, but never finished his degree. Today, he records live music for bands.

Patricia Johnson, 31, lived most of her childhood at the Alive Polarity Fellowship in northern California. Her parents moved there because of their interest in polarity therapy, bodywork that claims to balance one's physical and emotional harmony. Johnson moved to Kalispell with her parents and younger sister, Lorien, when the commune disbanded in the late 1980s. Johnson felt more mature than her high school classmates, making it difficult to adjust to conventional school. Johnson is now married with two young children and owns a natural food store with her father in Kalispell.

Kerr Duson, 31, grew up outside of Houston and has fond memories of her early childhood, living in a funky house surrounded by nature, before her carefree father died of brain cancer when she was 5. Her mother remarried several times after his death, first to a man with drug and alcohol problems. Duson escaped her home life by attending prep school on the East Coast. She briefly attended college in California before dropping out to live rurally and study massage and alternative healing. Today, she lives in Montana and works as a massage therapist and horse trainer.

Lara Mattson Radle, 34, was born to a young single mother whose immaturity and poverty contributed to abusive parenting. Radle's stepfather was a band manager, often letting his friends crash in their living room. Her parents' commitment to the counterculture declined as Radle got older. Even so, Radle identifies more with her counterculture roots and was an environmental activist when she was in her 20s. Today, she lives in Missoula with her husband and son. She recently received a master's degree in counseling.

Claire Vitucci, 27, grew up in a cabin without running water or electricity with her parents and half-sister outside of Butte. Throughout high school, she caught up on pop culture and took showers at a friend's house. She liked going to school, because it meant not having to spend hours chopping wood or fetching water. It took Vitucci a year to adjust to living in the dorms at the University of Montana (she couldn't hear the creek or see the stars), where she received her bachelor of fine arts degree. Today, Vitucci works as a graphic and Web designer in Douglas, Alaska.

Shawn Hammond's parents split up shortly after he was born and he spent most of his early childhood traveling throughout the southwestern United States with his mother, who was a human rights and peace activist. They lived in various communes, at annual Rainbow Family Gatherings, and mostly in their van. Hammond, now 31, tried college, but a substance

abuse problem – which he attributes to his early experimentation with drugs – led him to drop out. Hammond seeks a conventional life in Missoula, where he works in the construction field.

Although Ashlea Wolf Sherman, 21, is Hammond's stepsister, the 10 years between them gave them vastly different childhoods. Sherman's parents divorced when she was young, and she divided her early childhood between living with her mom in Eugene, Ore., and with her dad in a nearby commune. When Sherman's father gained custody of her, they moved to Montana and her father met and married Hammond's mother. Sherman claims she learned to love animals and the environment from her stepmother, who continues to bring her to Rainbow Family Gatherings. For now, Sherman travels and thinks she will pursue the conservation field.

The Definition of Counterculture

"Counterculture" refers to a group of people who are opposed to the values of mainstream society. The term has become synonymous with 1960s and 1970s counterculture, which was initially born out of rebellion against the conservative 1950s and the Vietnam War. The word "hippie" is sometimes also used interchangeably with "counterculture."

The beliefs and practices of members of the counterculture were wide-ranging, Weisner wrote. They included free expression, self-enhancing, experimental, morally aware, open to change; politically radical, opposed to the Vietnam War; drug-taking; in favor of civil rights; anti-materialistic, pro-natural, anti-authority; spiritual; and experimenting with family lifestyles.

But the counterculture was made up of many sub-groups, often with conflicting ideas and agendas for change. "The countercultural generation was influenced by many ideals and

social conditions of the time: a political movement, a moral search for personal meaning, a desire for the 'natural,' open, and free, by the baby boom demographic bulge and the economic expansion of the time, by the search for new forms of religious and spiritual expression, and by the particular subsets of American youth who formed it," Weisner wrote.

The counterculture movement sparked a revolution that quickly spread throughout the United States and parts of Europe. These youth sought to change weaknesses they saw in their own families. But instead of rebelling like youth in every generation do, they did so as a group with a generational identity interested in "change, rebellion, and a moral critique of self and society," Weisner wrote. Some members of the counterculture lived in urban or rural communes with others who had similar interests. Others lived away from society without a commune, participating in the back-to-the-land movement. Still others lived in mainstream society, but rejected conventional culture and advocated for issues such as peace and human rights.

Even those living on communes had wide-ranging interests, as evidenced by a 2000 piece broadcast on "News Hour with Jim Lehrer" about contemporary communes. Lehrer mentioned communities devoted to making nut butter, advocating anarchy, and even one devoted to clowning. "Others focus on group marriage, self sufficiency, visions, Zen, esoteric Christianity, war tax resistance, and organic gardening," Lehrer said. "Name a gig, and there's likely an intentional community advocating it."

Alive Polarity Fellowship, where Patricia Johnson grew up, was interested in polarity, but was more conservative than other members of the counterculture. The members weren't allowed to use firearms, tobacco, drugs and alcohol. Marriage was a sacrament in the community, and unmarried couples – even guests at the hot springs – were not allowed to sleep in the same room.

The individuals I interviewed also had diverse definitions of what it means to be part of the counterculture. Kerr Duson, whom I interviewed at her home in Missoula, said “hippies” have positive qualities like “wanting to live closer to the land, loving, peaceful, and finding compromises and loving ways to resolve situations.” But she also associates the word with “drugs, free love and aimless wandering.”

“There were a lot of problems,” she said. “But [her parents’] set of values about health and the outdoors, and where I grew up near the forest with snakes, skunks and possums, has shaped who I am. It’s not black and white in terms of being in a hippie family. There are all shades of gray.”

Claire Vitucci defines a member of the counterculture as “someone who chooses to live an alternative lifestyle using less energy... eating organic food and hormone-free milk. They’re more politically active... [or] withdrawn from society.”

Lara Mattson Radle once thought members of the counterculture had to have long hair and do drugs, but she’s realized that genuine hippies don’t necessarily look like that. She considers members of the counterculture to be “open-minded, questioning authority and the established way, a political activist.”

Counterculture Parents

Inevitably, the counterculture youth of America decided to have children, and many of them wanted to raise their kids with their unconventional values. Weisner found that the counterculture parents in his study were mostly middle-class Caucasians who came from “cultured, sophisticated, and economically advantaged homes.” They were well educated, but made significantly lower monthly incomes than conventional families. Many of them had moved a lot as children, and their own parents had a high rate of divorce and remarriage.

Many of them described their childhoods as unhappy and said they didn't have a good relationship with their own parents.

Weisner's study included 154 counterculture families: 54 in communes, 47 single mothers and their children not living in communes who were not divorced or widowed, and 53 in social contract families or "unmarried marrieds." Weisner and his colleagues followed the families from 1974, when the mothers were in their third trimester of pregnancy, through the early 1990s, when the children reached 18. They compared them to a sample group of 51 married parents and their children. They found the counterculture families by contacting Lamaze teachers, birth centers, women's organizations, universities and natural food stores, mostly in urban California communities. The families were paid \$5 for each interview, questionnaire or standardized test, plus \$80 each year towards their child's pediatric care. Weisner published his findings in several scientific journals from the mid-1970s through the beginning of the 21st century

The subjects who lived in communes said they most commonly joined because they shared an interest with the other members, including agricultural, intellectual, political and religious ideas. Usually, these families chose to live in rural areas away from mainstream society and wanted to share household responsibilities, expenses and childrearing. The mother was usually the primary caregiver in communal families, but sometimes all members took turns. Sleeping arrangements ranged from just the mother and child, to a few adults and children in one room, to a hundred kids and adults sharing a room. In some communes, Weisner found that six months after birth, children were placed in a nursery and had less contact with parents.

The women's liberation and counterculture movements made it more common and acceptable for single mothers to keep their children in the 1970s. The unmarried mothers in

Weisner's study either lived together in boarding houses or alone in apartments. The boarding houses created social and financial advantages for the single mothers, like children sharing toys and mothers allocating care-taking duties. About half of the single mothers in Weisner's study were older and more educated, and said they planned their pregnancies. These women more commonly had good jobs with health insurance, which they returned to within six months after the birth of their child. They often used group resources and childcare while they were at work, and sought men in their lives to act as role models for their children. The other half of the single mothers in the study were younger, less educated and did not plan their pregnancies. They relied on government aid, parents or other adults in their lives.

The social contract families or "unmarried marrieds" chose to live together and share a social, rather than legal-contract. They preferred to create a bond of love and trust rather than obtain a legal document from the church and state. The parents in the "unmarried marrieds" tended to equally share childrearing duties. Compared to the other groups, they were more similar to traditional families, often exchanging wedding bands and giving the child the father's surname.

Weisner compared his subjects to 51 traditional families whose values included as classifying success as excelling at one's career, materialism, and choosing to live in a technological society. The mothers in the traditional families more often worked full or part time and were more educated than the women in the counterculture families. They also stayed with their partners longer and had higher family incomes. Weisner found that the traditional parents also breastfed their children and promoted self-reliance, qualities that were presented as counterculture practices in the 1970s.

A small, short-term study, by sociologists Robert A. Rath and Douglas J. McDowell, sought to come to conclusions about counterculture parents and their parenting philosophies.

Rath and McDowell interviewed 26 parents living in non-communal settings in Pennsylvania who considered themselves members of the counterculture, hippies or “freaks.” The parents claimed to have a tolerance for differences, encouraged free expression, discouraged competition and materialism, had rebellious attitudes toward conventional society, used drug, and were interested in rock music, health foods, astrology, and distinctive clothing styles. Many of the men had long hair and facial hair. Rath and McDowell collected their data in 1971, and published the study in Sociological Symposium later that year.

Most of the parents in the Rath and McDowell study were between 20 and 24 years old, had attended college, and were from suburban or small urban areas with fathers who were white collar and Protestant. “Most were reared in what they characterized as a fairly permissive and liberal atmosphere where parents were described as showing little concern and interest in the lives of their children,” Rath and McDowell wrote.

The counterculture parents described their own parents as “too busy” to spend time with family, because they were more interested in concentrating on their careers. “They gave us a lot of freedom,” one respondent said. “They were permissive as hell. But it was all a lot of crap. It just gave them the time to do their money making, social climbing thing.”

Other sociologists, Angela A. Aidala and Benjamin D. Zablocki, focused their study on parents in counterculture communes. In contrast with Weisner’s study, they found that only 10 percent of parents living in counterculture communes they studied came from broken homes, whereas 24 percent of the general population had divorced parents in the 1970s. Aidala and Zablocki’s research was also short-term: they interviewed members of 60 urban communes in six major U. S. cities from 1974 through 1976. Like the parents in studies by Weisner and Rath and McDowell, they found that commune members and their parents were more educated than the general population, and most had attended college and had

professional jobs. Even so, most of these college-educated commune members worked in lower status professional jobs such as musician, social worker, nurse or teacher and did not have large incomes. Aidala and Zablocki published their findings in a 1991 article in *Marriage and Family Review*.

Members of the counterculture had a unique parenting style. Weisner's counterculture subjects emphasized shared feelings, honesty, expressiveness, intimacy and physical contact with their children. Similarly, the parents in the Rath and McDowell study vowed to be openly loving and affectionate, with both parents involved in childrearing. They wanted their children to be creative, self-confident, direct and honest. They also believed it was important to feel a sense of responsibility to themselves and others, tolerate and appreciate individual differences and be open to change and experimentation. They wanted to instill counterculture ideals in their children, like being open towards sex and sexuality, questioning authority, and being committed to peace and nonviolence. They also said they wanted their children to have the freedom to develop and define their own values and way of life. The parents in Weisner's study acknowledged that their children might or might not adopt their way of life and they said that "their children's lives were their own," Weisner wrote. One parent told Weisner: "They have to do their thing just as we did ours."

Feather Sherman, 57, a mother of five, including Shawn Hammond and stepdaughter Ashlea Wolf Sherman, said her parenting philosophy includes "lots of love and respect, to help my children grow to their potential as individuals, and follow their path in life." But as a peace and human rights advocate, she sometimes put her activism before her kids. "They were along for the ride," she said.

Weisner noted in his initial articles that most counterculture parents chose their lifestyle because of their own preferences and not to benefit their children. But they were

obviously concerned parents, because when they became aware of their pregnancies they decreased or ended their drug use and sought healthcare providers interested in unconventional births, Weisner reported. And when their children were older, some of the parents compromised their counterculture ideals. Some gave up living rurally and making a conventional living in order to give their children a good education and other necessities.

Such was the case with many members of the Farm, according to the 1998 compilation “Voices From the Farm: Adventures in Community Living” edited by Farm resident Rupert Fike. “There was a better standard of living to be had by going where the good-paying jobs were,” one former Farm resident wrote. “There were better schools and more cultural activities for kids in the cities.” Most of the members of the Farm were already college educated, making it easy to leave and create a comfortable lifestyle for their kids.

“If my children wanted to be hippies living in the backwoods some day, well, they should have all the information and tools to make that decision, rather than just my saying, Hay [sic], this is where we live, and you’ll get new shoes when the Petty Cash lady has some money, and they’ll sort of fit,” another Farm resident wrote in “Voices from the Farm.” “So I took them away so they could have more of a view of the world, see movies, go places, experience other things.”

These parents originally joined one of hundreds of communes through the United States because they wanted to be with people with similar values and goals. Few members joined communes to restructure the nuclear family, but did so for “consensual community,” Aidala and Zablocki found during their research of 60 urban communes.

Patricia Johnson’s parents left Kalispell in the early 1980s to join Alive Polarity Fellowship, a commune housed at the Murrieta Hot Springs Resort in northern California,

because of their interest in polarity therapy. The commune members were also interested in meditation and vegetarianism.

Patrick Kahn's parents also moved to the Farm because they wanted to be self-reliant with a community of like-minded people. Kahn's parents were one of the first to settle on the Farm, initially attending English professor Stephen Gaskin's "Monday Night Class," an experimental college class that drew hundreds of hippies each week to San Francisco State College in the late 1960s. Like many who attended hippie-guru Gaskin's class, Kahn's parents joined the hundreds of "Caravaners" in 1971 on a trip across the United States to settle on 1,000 acres. At first the families crammed into school buses, tents, tipis and drafty shacks, but later built houses, some of which could accommodate up to 50 people. Meditation, spirituality, and experimenting with LSD were important components of Gaskin's philosophy. Kahn was one of the first babies born on the Farm and lived there with his parents until he was 11.

Communal Parenting: "If Someone Said Mom, Everyone Looked Up"

Part of the attraction of communal living for some counterculture families was the ability to share household and childrearing duties, and to have easily accessible playmates and play areas for their kids. "Children were typically considered part of the communal family, children of all the adults and siblings of all other children, although usually birth or adoptive parents actually retained primary *de facto* responsibility for their well-being," wrote sociologist Timothy Miller in his 1998 book "The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond."

Bennett Berger, a sociologist who studied family issues in communes in California in the early 1970s, witnessed communal childcare, feedings, bathing and potty times. He found that the mothers living in communes were usually the primary caregivers. He had heard

rumors that communal parenting could include collective breastfeeding and several men deliberately having sex with a fertile woman so as to make the father ambiguous, but he never witnessed such extremes.

Kahn, who grew up on the Farm, said communal parenting made sense because multiple families lived under the same roof and everyone had similar parenting ideas. The kids respected the adults but called their parents by their first names for practical reasons. “If someone said ‘mom,’ everyone looked up,” he said.

Johnson, who grew up in the Alive Polarity Fellowship, said she didn’t mind having multiple parents. “Everyone had the same philosophy,” she said. “I never felt overly disciplined by another person.” She also enjoyed learning parental skills as a young child. “Children were raised together, giving the older kids caretaking skills,” she said. “A lot of children miss cross-generational lessons today.”

But Kshama Ferrar, who studied families in 60 urban communes and published her findings in the 1982 book “Alternative Lifestyles,” found that in multiple-family communes, parents sometimes conflicted over childrearing, and in isolated family households, parents may have struggled with balancing parental and communal responsibilities. The majority of parents who left the communes did so because they didn’t like the way their children were being raised, Ferrar found.

By the time the children in Weisner’s study were 3, less than one-third of the communal children were still living in communes. Some parents left because of conflicts with other commune members or separations from their partner or spouse. Some did not want to participate in communal childcare and discipline. Others no longer agreed with the group’s ideology or felt it was a better lifestyle for them when they were younger and childless.

“Among the reasons parents gave for leaving these groups was... that they wanted closer,

more exclusive control and engagement with their children in nuclear family settings,” Weisner wrote.

Drugs: Not Just for the Parents

It was common for members of the counterculture to use drugs such as marijuana and hallucinogens for recreation, mind-expansion and spirituality. And they sometimes shared their drugs with their children. Berger saw counterculture commune members pass marijuana joints to children as young as 5 or 6 in the California communes he studied. LSD, peyote and other psychedelics were not forbidden for use among children, although this kind of drug use was more ceremonial and reserved for special occasions.

Medical students Charley M. Johnston and Robert W. Deisher, from the department of pediatrics at the University of Washington, who studied children in communes in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia in the summer of 1972, wrote that the members allowed the children to drink alcohol and smoke pot because it would be hypocritical not to give them the same freedom as adults. They published their short study in a 1973 issue of *Pediatrics*.

Shawn Hammond, who lived in a van with his mother for much of his childhood, said his parents smoked pot and took hallucinogens like mushrooms and peyote when he was young, but they don’t use drugs anymore. Vitucci, who grew up in the remote cabin, also remembers her parents casually lighting a joint when their friends were over, but not during “family time.”

Duson, whose father died of cancer when she was 5, remembers her dad’s last New Year’s Eve. It began with her mother rolling a “good-for-you cigarette.” That evening, wearing silly baby bonnets and cowboy hats, Duson’s parents and friends tripped on acid.

They played with Duseon and the other kids and colored with them in their coloring books. “I picked up on their energy,” she said.

But Duseon doesn’t remember all of her parents’ drug experiences with fondness. After her father’s death, Duseon’s mother married a man with a drug and alcohol problem. At 11, Duseon was afraid to get into the car with her stepfather after he drank too much one evening. Another night, he became so sick from alcohol that the family had to bring him to the emergency room as he vomited blood. The man was “neglectful and disconnected,” and Duseon’s mom became emotionally unavailable, Duseon said. As a result, Duseon became so depressed that she considered suicide. Her mother remained married to the alcoholic until she was 14.

One child in Weisner’s study remembered being left in the car with other kids while his mother went barhopping. In another extreme case in Weisner’s study, the parents of a 19-year-old didn’t work and the child supported them and, she feared, their drug habit.

Drug use varied in counterculture communes, with many of them disallowing it. In fact, sociologists Aidala and Zablocki, who interviewed members of 60 communes in the mid-1970s, found that the percentage of young people doing illegal drugs was lower in communes than the general population and use among members decreased after they joined.

When the members of the Farm first met in San Francisco at Stephen Gaskin’s “Monday Night Class,” they smoked a lot of pot and frequently tripped on acid as part of their spiritual quest. When they relocated to Tennessee, the commune members didn’t allow alcohol and tobacco, but permitted sacramental use of marijuana. And Alive Polarity Fellowship, where Johnson lived as a child, didn’t allow any drugs or alcohol.

Hammond remembers smoking pot when he was 9 at a commune in New Mexico, where his mom left him while she did some traveling. “She must have thought it was safe,”

he said. His mother also liked to go to Rainbow Family Gatherings, a community of like-minded people who are interested in intentional community building, non-violence and alternative lifestyles, to pray for peace. The Gatherings began in 1972, and occur annually in a different National Forest in the United States. It was at a Gathering that Hammond took LSD for the first time when he was 10. He remembers running through the Gathering all night, losing a shoe and his favorite pocketknife in the process. When he made his way back to his mom's van she asked him, "What's wrong?" and he took off again, freaked out by the query. They returned to the annual Gatherings, attending dozens of them despite the incident. "I was not there for him as much as I should have been," Hammond's mom admits. "He was smoking pot at an early age."

Sociologist Berger argued that allowing children to smoke pot is a form of children's liberation and is harmless—unless they get caught. And children growing up in rural communes don't have to worry about getting caught unless they move to mainstream society, Berger said.

But most of the counterculture parents in Weisner's study were concerned about their children's drug use, and with good reason. By the time the counterculture children were pre-teens, 17 percent of them, mostly the ones raised by single mothers, already had problems with drugs. At 18, the counterculture children's use of hard drugs was two to three times higher than the national average in 1993, which was 18 percent of boys and 16 percent of girls, according to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA). Also, NIDA reported that in 1993, 24 percent of boys and 18 percent of girls used marijuana, while 50 percent of the teens in Weisner's did.

Compared to NIDA's survey, the girls in Weisner's study were heavier drug users and felt the negative effects – such as dropping out of high school, getting pregnant, leaving

home before finishing high school, and troubled relationships. The anthropologist's study ended when the children turned 18, leaving no data on the role drugs played in their adult lives.

Hammond has recovered from a drug and alcohol problem. He said in college he started doing cocaine excessively in addition to smoking pot and drinking. "I'm sure it had to do with doing drugs early," he said.

Hammond's stepsister, Ashlea Wolf Sherman, now 21, experimented with smoking pot in seventh grade and through her teens, but said she's now "not into it." "It just makes me tired, and I eat enough already," she said, referring to the "munchies" she gets when high. "I'd rather have more energy," she said in an earlier interview. I'm glad I figured it out and I'm only 20 years old." She credits her father and stepmother's honest and open attitude for allowing her to safely experiment with drugs.

Duson doesn't use drugs as an adult because of her negative experiences with her alcoholic stepfather. She admits she picks men whose behavior is much like the men in her life as a child: they are often drinkers, smokers and drug users. Today, Alanon, an organization for people with alcoholics their lives, has helped Duson pick healthier relationships.

Open Sexuality in the Counterculture

Members of the counterculture tended to be free sexually, and some shared this attitude with their children. Medical students Johnston and Deisher found that in two communes where "parents... spoke openly about sex and with no taboos against physical contact," most children had sex with peers by 5 or 6. Larry Constantine, who cited Johnston and Deisher's study in an article in the 1977 book "Marriage and Alternatives: Exploring

Intimate Relationships,” acknowledged this as a startling finding. Most children are physically able to have intercourse with peers by 5 or 6, but in most cultures, few lose their virginity before the age of 8 to 10, Constantine wrote.

Johnston and Deisher found that some of these youngsters said sex was enjoyable while others weren’t interested in it. Some adults did not seem to care whether children participated in sex. Others expressed concern that early interest in sex would cheat children of their childhood or affect educational achievement, but Johnston and Deisher said they found no evidence of either occurring.

“There was no evidence that early genital sexuality interfered with educational progress or personality development or was in any way contradictory with traditional childhood pursuits,” Constantine agreed in “Marriage and Alternatives,” in which he cited seven studies of children living in counterculture communes, including Johnston and Deisher’s study. “Their parents felt that, in being freed of the moral structures that have prevented so many in our society from enjoying fulfilling sexual lives, these children have a great personal asset for happiness and will be spared much of the adolescent conflict between physical maturity and social prohibition.” In traditional settings, children explore sexual behavior, and the parents often respond with anxiety and guilt. Studies have suggested that early sexual experimentation is not harmful—other than sexual abuse, of course—as long as parental attitudes are open, Constantine concluded.

Journalist John Rothchild and filmmaker Susan Wolf, who recorded their travels to communes throughout the United States in their 1976 book “Children of the Counterculture,” came across an extreme case of a 6-year-old in an urban commune having sex with his mother and other adult women. The adults bragged about it, but the boy never said anything about it, even when Rothchild and Wolf mentioned it to him. Instead of bragging about their

child winning a baseball game or making a painting, the adults on this particular commune felt pride about the boy's precocious sexual activity. In other communes, Rothchild and Wolf found that since communal parents talked openly and maturely about sex and even sometimes had sex in front of their children, older children didn't joke about it.

Berger noted that 12- to 13-year-olds were routinely having sex at some of the communes he studied. He came across two cases in which children ages 6 to 8 had intercourse. In one abusive case a 60-year-old was having sexual activity with a 3-year-old, and the adults on the commune, including the child's mother, didn't think it was a problem. At another commune, a 25-year-old man had intercourse with a 4-year-old girl. Her mother thought it was OK because the girl had sex with other boys her age previously and she said the man was fond of her daughter. Other adults said they thought sexual activity was not healthy for children as it might make them dependent on their lovers, hindering the independence they desired in their children, Berger wrote.

While most members of the counterculture had a liberal sexual attitude, Alive Polarity Fellowship, where Johnson grew up, was more conservative. Only married couples were allowed to sleep in the same room, and single adults didn't get the same respect as those who were married.

Married couples were also more respected on the Farm, where Kahn grew up, but some, like Kahn's parents, were in a "four marriage," in which two couples lived together in order to share household duties and, in most cases, sex. Kahn's household on the Farm included his four parents, two biological siblings and four stepsiblings, among other families. "Four marriages" often developed when two couples connected spiritually, sometimes while taking LSD, Fike wrote in "Voices From the Farm." Some of the "four marriages" began back in San Francisco and "were the forerunners of our communal life," Fike wrote. "Even

though gradually they dissolved, for a time these intimate extended families demonstrated how by living and working together, we could grow spiritually and through sacrifice and sharing.” But group marriages in the counterculture were rare, and sex was usually monogamous, according to sociologists Aidala and Zablocki.

Discipline and Authority: “You’ve Done It, Kid, Now Get Out of Here”

Counterculture parents tended to be laid-back about discipline, but they wanted their children to respect them just as they valued their children. Rath and McDowell, who interviewed 26 counterculture parents in Pennsylvania in 1971, found that their subjects were relaxed when it came to discipline and authority. They didn’t make their children follow rules that “don’t make sense.” “You make rules when you’re up tight about things and there are just not that many things that put us up tight [sic],” one subject said.

The parents also avoided advice from childrearing experts. “The manner in which parents went about child rearing [sic] was seen to stem from their own personal experiences and self-understanding, ‘common sense’ and ‘just being in tune with the child’s needs,’” Rath and McDowell wrote.

Duson’s mom did not set rules, giving her freedom to do what she pleased. “I was encouraged to be who I was,” she said. And Hammond said his mom never got mad at him, even when he took LSD at a Rainbow Family Gathering when he was 10. “My mom didn’t even know what discipline meant,” Hammond said. “She’s a softie.”

Hammond’s stepsister Sherman said the only rule her parents had was that the children couldn’t watch much television. Berger also found in the California communes he studied that kids were allowed to do pretty much what they wanted except watch TV.

Radle's mother also didn't set many rules or restrictions and treated Radle like an adult when she was a child. "Mom talked to us, asked our opinions and feelings and thoughts of our own and she respected us," she said. "My mother raised me to question things, why rules were in place."

But Radle's single mother's childrearing practices weren't consistent: she learned some of them from her conventional family. On the other hand, "she would say, 'You need to do this or else,'" Radle said. "And she never had a specific 'or else.'" Patience and time were needed for good follow through and her mother had neither. Radle said she did what she wanted and learned to put up with her mother's yelling.

Journalist Rothchild and filmmaker Wolf, who wrote "Children of the Counterculture," found that mainstream parents might discipline a child with "You should be ashamed" or "You know better than that," while counterculture parents would say, "You've done it, kid, now get out of here." They treated children more like adults.

The members of the Farm were against "praise and blame," because they wanted to discourage attention-getting and didn't want to single out any child from others, Rothchild and Wolf found.

"While we began the book with the suspicion that a hippie child is a wild child, we ended up believing that well-behaved children are the most radical alternative to American society," Rothchild and Wolf wrote. "The farther away from regular families and cities and careers that we get, the less obnoxious and self-centered the kids get."

Weisner found that his subjects had fewer behavior problems if their parents retained some conventional values, such as achievement, materialism, and future-oriented goals. (This is after controlling for early school problems, parental or teen substance abuse, and low socio-economic status.) Counterculture values such as humanism, pronaturalism and sex

egalitarianism also correlated with reducing adolescent behavior problems, but they, too, were associated with higher risk of drug use, especially for girls. In turn, children in Weisner's study with fewer behavior problems felt a commitment to achievement goals and materialism in addition to humanism, pronaturalism and sex egalitarianism.

When the counterculture children in Weisner's study turned 18, they said they would raise their own children with more rules even though they liked talking openly with their parents. "To me, I think we're more spiritual—we're willing to talk about things, I think we're more communicative than most kids and their parents," one girl said in Weisner's study. "Because when you start hiding things, then subconsciously it can build up with guilt in your mind. And that's what makes you wig out later in life... I think if you're open, even with drug use, I think you're a lot happier. I think you feel better about what you're doing."

As young adults, the counterculture kids in Weisner's study were also less likely to question authority than their parents. In contrast, children in the conventional comparison sample families were more likely to question politicians, advice books, and experts in the media, compared to their parents. "When we talked with adolescents and parents about these issues, it was clear that questioning authority remained an important cultural frame, but that many teens were relatively less questioning than their parents—partly because it was their parents who were doing the questioning," Weisner wrote.

Women's Liberation Parallels the Counterculture Movement

With the women's movement under way in the late 1960s through the mid-1970s, counterculture parents with gender egalitarian values often talked to their children about fairness, occupations and marriage, Weisner found. Some gave their children, especially the girls, androgynous toys and clothes.

The counterculture parents often tried to raise their children with equal household and childrearing responsibilities. The fathers in Weisner's study participated in domestic tasks more than traditional fathers. Still, counterculture fathers rarely did more household chores than their partners and participated even less if they worked outside the home, Weisner found.

But even small changes made by the counterculture made a difference in their children, Weisner indicated. "It is well known that child participation in such gender-differentiated domestic and family routines directly influence children's social behavior and gender typing," Weisner wrote. The more involved the father was in household duties the more children valued sex egalitarianism. And gender egalitarian values were important influences for the children regardless of whether the mother worked outside the home, Weisner wrote.

Most of the counterculture children in Weisner's study said that they disagreed that married women should stay home. The daughters usually agreed with their mothers' feminist views, but very few of them considered themselves radical feminists, according to Weisner.

Members of urban communes more commonly tried to redefine sex roles, while rural communes remained more traditional, wrote sociologist William L. Smith in his 1991 book "Families and Communes: An Examination of Nontraditional Lifestyles." But even in the urban communes the mother was usually the primary caregiver.

At the Farm, women were responsible for cooking and taking care of the children while the men more commonly worked in the fields and built shelters, but that didn't mean that women's work wasn't respected. Under the direction of Stephen Gaskin's wife, Ina May Gaskin, the Farm was a center for the natural childbirth movement of the 1970s, and the trained midwives were the most respected people in the commune.

Domestic jobs at the Farm were valued. “If you really want to be spiritual, you don’t have to sell your soul for eight hours a day in order to have 16 hours in which to eat and sleep and get it back together again,” Farm founder Gaskin wrote in “Hey Beatnik!” a publication designed to recruit Farm members in the mid-1970s. “You’d like it that your work should be seamless with your life and what you do for a living doesn’t deny everything else you believe in.”

Alive Polarity Fellowship, where Johnson grew up, was more conservative. Women and girls were required to wear shirts that covered their hips and buttocks. During swim lessons the girls had to wear skirts over their swimsuits. Jeans, makeup, bras and jewelry were not allowed, and women had to be accompanied by a chaperone when leaving the commune or when speaking to single men, journalist Pat O’Brien reported in a 1987 article in the Riverside, Calif. *Press-Enterprise*. Girls were required to learn skills such as knitting, crocheting, decorating cakes and arranging flowers, but Johnson doesn’t remember any boys working with textiles or in the kitchen. Even so, she said the skills she learned were practical. She admits the commune was sexist, but living there didn’t make her chauvinistic. Now she’s the matriarch of her family and an assertive businesswoman, managing and expanding Mountain Valley Foods in Kalispell.

Health: Vegetables and Tofu Instead of Jell-O and Lunchables

Members of the counterculture took an alternative approach to health, with many eating organic foods, having natural childbirths, using non-Western medicine, and breastfeeding. The counterculture children in Weisner’s study were breastfed and kept close to their mothers until, on average, 2 ½ years, which is longer than traditional families, but earlier than most cultures. The children rarely went to the doctor or dentist, yet they

maintained good health and ate natural foods. The parents often made their own baby food and used natural herbs for medicinal purposes.

“I never saw my parents as that different from other people,” said one teenager in Weisner’s study during an interview when she was 18. “Except that my dad had longer hair than most people’s parents. It’s not like it’s a different lifestyle. I think it’s actually a better lifestyle... growing your own vegetables and having your own goods and chicken for food.”

The Farm, where Kahn grew up, learned how to grow soybeans, an inexpensive, nutritious and satisfying food. The members of the Farm maintained a vegan diet, commonly including biscuits and gravy, sauerkraut, hot sauce, tofu, soy dairy, tempeh and tortillas, Kahn said.

Alive Polarity Fellowship was based at Murietta Hot Springs, a resort with a gourmet vegetarian restaurant, which the members operated. Johnson said she learned healthy eating habits while living there. “I didn’t like Dots, but I loved Fruit Leather,” she said. And the only meat Johnson claims to have eaten to this day is part of a piece of pepperoni and an anchovy, both by mistake. Johnson is also committed to breastfeeding. While I interviewed her, her toddler son frequently climbed on her lap to nurse when he wanted.

In contrast, Johnson’s younger sister, Lorien, said she has “food issues” from standing at the end of the buffet line at Alive Polarity to find that all of her favorite foods had already been taken. The adults got to eat first at the commune. Lorien also recalls being forced to eat avocado and oatmeal, foods she didn’t like as a child, revealing the commune’s rigid rules.

Sherman said as a child she ate rice, beans, vegetables and tofu—still her favorite foods today—while her classmates had Jell-O, macaroni and cheese and Lunchables. Sherman’s parents were also committed to homeopathic remedies rather than Western

medicine. When Sherman's middle school teachers wanted her to take Ritalin for her attention deficit disorder, her stepmother instead took her to a naturopath in Missoula. To solve the problem, the doctor gave Sherman a tincture and a note saying she could eat during class to stay attentive.

As a child, Vitucci, said she ate "home-cooked, gourmet meals" like homemade egg rolls, tortillas, meat and potatoes. Her mother also baked bread once a week in their cabin's wood stove oven. Before Vitucci's mom met her stepfather, the two spent a winter caretaking a remote ranch near Jackson Hole, Wyo. There was a freezer full of meat for Vitucci and her mom to eat, but since they were vegetarians at the time they cooked it and fed it to their Collie.

Radle's parents couldn't afford "hippie food" such as smoothies and granola, but her parents' friends introduced it to her as a child. Both Vitucci and Radle prefer organic, homemade foods rather than boxed meals with preservatives.

Duson remembers her parents eating Grape Nuts and fresh fruits and vegetables. "The juicer was always going and wheat grass grew in the window," Duson said. Her parents also experimented with a macrobiotic diet while Duson's father was dying of brain cancer, but the healthy foods didn't keep him alive, leaving her with a negative association with healthy food for many years. "If someone else had raised me I may not have refused to eat organic foods early on," she said. "I watched my father die of cancer. I refused to do another alternative diet." Duson rebelled as a teenager and went through a phase of eating mostly fast food. But towards the end of high school, she became vegetarian. And in college, after she went on a three-month backpacking trip with the Sierra Institute, she became "addicted" to being outside and bought a trailer in the country to be closer to nature and concentrate on

being healthy. She began eating organically and learned healing arts and bodywork from a friend's father, spurring her career as a massage therapist.

Hippie Anti-Materialism: "It's Not All About Money"

Members of the counterculture weren't interested in having material possessions for themselves or their children, Weisner wrote. But when the counterculture kids turned 18, many said they would seek more financial security as adults. In fact, Weisner's study indicated that there was little difference between the counterculture and traditional children in terms of materialistic values. The parents and their children recognized that this was probably because the children were more influenced by a society that is more materialistic than the culture of 1960s and '70s.

"I think my parents made the decision to follow their ideals rather than do what would have made them wealthy," said one young man in Weisner's study. "It has some negative material consequences, and the sadness in my life is that I am way too aware of these material consequences." The teenager said he wanted to be richer as an adult.

Some teens worried about their parents' economic future. One child said: "I think they might have some problems... I get a little worried. I feel like I'm the parent." Another teenager said: "I want to live in a house and not an apartment. My parents will never own a house. And I want a house where I can have a yard with a dog—that's my thing."

But many counterculture parents chose to not make much money. Hammond's parents rarely did things conventionally, even when they were trying to make a living. "The sixties threw a lot of people for a curve," he said. "My dad could have had a business doing what he wanted, but he never got a license. You can't really make it like that. They didn't know what they were doing."

Radle was aware of her family's financial struggles, even as a youngster. Radle's mom worked at Mountain Bell as a telephone operator after she finished high school, and Radle's stepfather was a booking agent for a Missoula bluegrass band, "The Lost Highway Band." The young family never had much money, as evidenced by a postcard Radle received from her stepdad while he traveled with the band to Austin, Texas. He wrote: "Dear Lara, Tell Mommy to sell my guitar if she needs money. Love, Daddy."

Many counterculture commune members were required to give up their assets when they chose to join the group. When the Johnsons joined Alive Polarity, they had just sold a log cabin near Kalispell and shares in a cooperative food store, but according to Patricia Johnson, did not have much money to give. The members' assets went into the commune's hot springs resort and restaurant, where Johnson's mother was executive assistant and her father was maintenance manager. Johnson said she's glad that she didn't have commercial toys like Barbie dolls when she was a child. But her sister, Lorien, remembers being disappointed one Christmas when she got a shirt and the other girls got dolls. Lorien's memory illustrates how even siblings can be affected differently by a similar childhood.

Members of the Farm chose to take a vow of poverty when they joined the commune. They borrowed from the Book of Acts in the New Testament to illustrate their philosophy: "And all that believed were together and had things in common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all as every man had need." All of the founders of the Farm pooled their money together in the beginning and bought 1,000 acres in Lewis County, Tennessee. When others joined the Farm, they were required to give up their assets, including subsequent inheritances.

Kahn was born in a school bus on the Farm and later lived in one of the nicer Farm homes, a three-story house made of recycled materials, with 30 other people. But today, his

1970s Volkswagen bus is parked outside a \$2 million, 9,000-square-foot house in Arlee with two kitchens, nine bathrooms, a swimming pool and a greenhouse. He's caretaking the house for a friend who's been trying to sell it for years. The house has a couple of couches in the main living room, but it's mostly empty because Kahn can't afford to furnish it, nor does he care to. He also got tired of replacing light bulbs—and couldn't afford them—so he stopped. Kahn said he'd be happy living back in the school bus where he was born and only lives in the mansion because it's a free place to stay.

Like Kahn, Sherman dislikes possessions. Her parents taught her "to never have more stuff than what fits in the saddlebags of your motorcycle or horse." She brags that she can fit all of her belongings in one pillowcase.

And Vitucci said her parents' values and lifestyle living in the barebones cabin taught her that money does not make you happy. "It's not all about money," she said. "My parents taught me you *can* live the way you want to live."

Political Attitudes and Social Responsibility in the Counterculture

Counterculture parents tended to be more liberal politically, and, according to Weisner's study, passed those values on to their kids. Counterculture children in Weisner's study were more liberal than their peers and more often agreed with their parents' social values. Fifty-nine percent of the teens from counterculture families in Weisner's study said they considered themselves as "liberal" or "left" in political views, while only 27 percent of the teens in the 1993 national Astin Freshmen Questionnaire made that identification. Also, 4 percent of the teens living in the counterculture whom Weisner studied said they were "right of center" compared to 23 percent in the Astin Freshmen Questionnaire.

Most teens in Weisner's agreed with their parents and felt not enough was being done about pollution, and many were in favor of legalizing marijuana. But many of the parents didn't see it that way. "Many parents believed that their teens were unlike them, were much more conservative than they were, and were part of a current teen generation very different from them," he wrote." They struggled to come to terms at midlife with their goals of creating some continuity between their own and their children's ideals."

But Filmmaker Lisa Law's 1990 documentary "Flashing on the Sixties: A Tribal Document" sought to make connections between counterculture parents and their children's generation. "They were rebels," Pilar Law, said about her counterculture mother, also the filmmaker. "Having been rebels, if we are now rebels they can understand that. They can understand where we're coming from, the need to carry this on, the understanding of ourselves, our future and to do something about it."

"I do whatever I can to preserve as much as I can," Law continued. "I make it a conscious effort every day and I try to spread that consciousness."

Counterculture parents in Weisner's study also wanted their children to feel a sense of social responsibility. But when he questioned the children at 18, he found that some teens were annoyed by their parents' focus on social responsibility. One girl said she felt guilty that she wasn't doing enough for the disadvantaged.

At times it was difficult for parents to juggle their parenting and passion for activism. Such was the case for Hammond's mother, Feather Sherman, who was an advocate for the Navajo Indians in Flagstaff, Ariz., after the Navajo-Hopi Land Settlement Act in 1974, when thousands of Navajo Indians were forced to move off of the reservation. Sherman was making little money, not eating properly, and working so hard that she developed a severe kidney infection. She was so fatigued that she couldn't stand up, let alone take care of her

son. She eventually recovered with help from a friend. At other times, Sherman brought her son to Rainbow Family Gatherings to advocate peace, but got so caught up in her agenda that she lost track of him while he got into trouble with drugs.

On the other hand, Sherman's activism for peace had a positive influence on her stepdaughter, Ashlea Wolf Sherman. Feather introduced Rainbow Family Gatherings to Ashlea when she was 10 or 11, and more than 10 years later, she still looks forward to the Fourth of July weekend when thousands of people gather to pray for peace. "I meet new people, gain new experiences," Ashlea said. "I understand where they're coming from, whether we get along or not. There's nothing like getting together with 40,000 people in a field and holding hands. There's something familiar, understanding and comforting about it."

Feather's concern for the "Earth and its animals" has also influenced Ashlea, who picks up and recycles bottles and cans after events at the Wilma Theater and the Other Side in Missoula, to help save the environment and make a little extra money. The 21-year-old thinks she'll pursue the conservation field.

Children's Liberation: Self-Reliant Kids

The counterculture parents in Weisner's study wanted their children to make their own decisions, ranging from small daily choices to life resolutions. Weisner found that at a young age the children in his study were more independent than children raised in traditional families, even though they had been breastfed longer. In the beginning of the study, Weisner and his colleagues theorized that the early independence developed because the counterculture parents trusted other caretakers and felt children's peer relationships were important.

Likewise, sociologist Miller cited three psychiatric researchers who said, “children in communes tended to be more relaxed with adult strangers, and less dependent on their mothers, than... children in nuclear families.” Communes displayed “warmth, concern, and dedication to the children” in most cases, Miller wrote.

Medical students Johnston and Deisher described commune children as self-confident, independent, open, warm and mature. They found that communes that took childrearing seriously produced kids that “demonstrated [a] high degree of maturity, self-confidence, and self-reliance” seemed to mature psychologically for their age and deal well with unfamiliar and traumatic experiences. One 10-year-old maturely told the researchers that his parents’ separation was better for his family. The children they studied were also able to resolve conflicts with each other and express ideas with adults, even if they disagreed with them.

Constantine wrote in his 1977 article that children in communes were “self-reliant but cooperative, competent more than competitive, friendly, robust, and self-confident.” The adults gave kids positive guidance and rarely disciplined them. The kids were also expected to work out difficulties and contribute to the community. Children often acted as caretakers, resulting in children experimenting with responsibilities and adults taking a break from being grown-ups. “Like generations before them, they are apt to emerge well equipped to like those in which they grew up,” Constantine wrote. “Unlike their predecessors, these interpersonally adept and adaptable people could also be well equipped for much more than just the same life-style. When children of alternative life-styles begin to map out their own alternatives, the textbooks may have to be rewritten!”

But even though Hammond assumed an adult role at an early age, he often felt ignored. “I was responsible for cooking, cleaning up, doing chores—dishes, vacuuming,

mopping,” he said. “My dad instilled hard work and honesty. I’ll pass that on [to my children].” The slight crinkles around Hammond’s eyes make him seem a little older – or maybe it’s the fact that he said he had to grow up fast. “I was always working, too, so at 12, I had to pay for groceries and bills,” he said.

Sociologist Berger said “the hippie theory” of children’s liberation is distinctive. Berger’s data came from eight rural communes, mostly in California, in the early 1970s. The children he studied were allowed to drink alcohol and smoke marijuana with adults and were expected to call their parents by their first names. Children did adult work and sometimes lived apart from their parents. They were seen as worthy of love but not attention, according to Berger. The children appeared more independent, and although there weren’t schools on many of the communes, the children seemed to learn from life.

Berger found that by age 4 or 5 children in one commune were given love and respect, but not attention or close monitoring. They were allowed to come and go as they pleased, eat and sleep wherever they wanted, have sex, use drugs, express their views at commune meetings, and settle their own disputes. An exception was if children became annoying or the parents thought they would cause injury to one another. The adults believe children should learn how to deal with their own “hassles,” Berger wrote. Berger found few cases in which counterculture adults treated children like kids in conventional society, such as discouraging television watching and not lending an expensive tool to an irresponsible child.

Although their lifestyle seemed to produce positive outcomes, Berger wondered in his 1981 book “The Survival of a Counterculture: Ideological Work and Everyday Life Among Rural Communards” if parents chose to raise their children in the counterculture out

of selfishness. But even if commune members treated their children like adults for selfish reasons, Berger said it would help the children grow up fast and motivate them to achieve.

Rothchild and Wolf, who brought their own two children with them during their travels to communes throughout the United States, found that commune children were taught to be direct or “straight.” Children didn’t suck their thumbs and they weren’t introverted. The adults weren’t concerned about what the children did as long as they behaved while doing it. “Commune people brag about a lack of control in their lives, but ultimately, as parents, they may have more control than suburban parents,” Rothchild and Wolf wrote.

Rothchild and Wolf were impressed by the overall organization of the Farm and the members’ ability to make kids behave. “On the Farm one of our tenets was talking ‘real’ to our children, expecting the most from them, accepting zero complaints or whines, and most of all not rewarding such behavior,” one Farm resident wrote in “Voices From the Farm.” “There was pretty good universal agreement on such matters.” In exchange for respecting their parents and other adults, kids were valued by everyone and were “treated like people,” said Kahn, who lived on the Farm until he was in seventh grade. “Their ideas and input were respected.” In other respects, kids on the Farm were able to act like children to a greater extent than kids living in mainstream culture. “We had the freedom of time,” Kahn said. Kids were free to roam and learn from the land and didn’t have the influence of television. Kahn said his upbringing on the Farm and his proximity to the land made him an outgoing boy. He likened the often-unsupervised groups of kids that roamed the woods to a pack of dogs.

Rothchild and Wolf saw children on the Ranch in northern California playing with rusty nails, old hammers, rocks, old cars, appliances—and even a dangerous bull. The kids would usually drop and sleep whenever and wherever they were tired. The mothers justified it by saying they wanted to trust their kids to do what they wanted in order to instill trust in

them, but it didn't work; many of the kids were unruly. The lack of routine made it so the adults were unsuccessful at finishing anything during the day, such as chores and teaching kids how to read, Rothchild and Wolf wrote. The adults would arrange activities or outings spontaneously and the car would break down or something would happen to change plans. The children's lack of appointments made it so they were never disappointed, but the downside was boredom and mayhem: when the children didn't have an activity they would get out of control. The children also never knew when the next meal was coming, so they ate as much as they could when they could.

Still, the authors concluded: "The Ranch children were beautiful, disorganized and friendly. They lacked an urban aggressive edge: they were neither calculating nor hostile. The lack of hostility was amazing; they approached adults and each other with an openness we had not encountered before. They were happy on the mountain, in their group, and on the mountain their lives made sense."

A reviewer of "Children of the Counterculture" disagreed with Rothchild and Wolf's opinion of children in counterculture communes. "Children in these rural settings were allowed physical freedom in terms of experiencing sex, drugs, fighting, orgies, epidemics, personal mobility, and 'parental freak-outs,'" sociologist D. Kelly Weisberg wrote in the *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. "They were not protected from physical danger or potentially traumatic experiences." She feared that the children were in danger of malnutrition and inadequate healthcare.

Weisberg said Rothchild and Wolf didn't take into consideration the neglect and abuse they witnessed and how this would affect the children in the future. "With no scheduled activities in their lives and no expectations for them to be in a certain place at a certain time, what are the results of the absence of stability in their lives?" Weisberg asked.

The children were self-reliant out of necessity and could only rely on themselves, she wrote. But, she admitted that they were mature when it came to nudity and sex.

While Rothchild and Wolf optimistically described the Farm's anti-praise philosophy, which discouraged attention-getting and didn't single out children, Weisberg argued that this was just proof that the children weren't given enough attention and it would have long-term negative effects such as quality of their future relationships. "The reader cannot resist feeling tremendous sympathy and admiration for the way many of these children handle the hardships in their lives," Weisberg concluded.

Similarly, Miller pointed out in "The 60s Communes" that not all kids had positive upbringings. One man he interviewed compared his childhood to "Lord of the Flies," and said he was left to fend for himself. On few occasions, child abuse occurred, but no more than in mainstream culture, Miller wrote. "Many communes rejected ageism and thus considered children, at least in theory, full equals in the commune, unrestricted in their behavior," he wrote.

Johnson, who grew up in Alive Polarity, said she felt more mature than her classmates when she started going to public school. "I was brought up to be consciousness-driven," she said. "I had seen a lot in my life and was not into playing games of high school—the fake mentality. I had no patience for it."

Education Practices in the Counterculture

Counterculture parents often had an unconventional approach to education, sending their kids to alternative schools or home-schooling them. Some communes started their own schools and taught domestic skills such as building and repairing a house, learning about animals and plants, playing musical instruments, and cooking, Johnston and Deisher wrote.

In many communes, the adults were educated and included former professors or teachers, who taught the kids traditional lessons like verbal skills, science, reading and math. Another group Johnston and Deisher studied had sufficient education until age 10 or 12 when the kids began developing other interests and the group didn't place a priority on academics. "With the majority of children, a high curiosity level and willingness to learn new things was apparent," the researchers wrote.

The Ranch, a commune in California, started a school in 1978 that was open to kids who didn't live on the commune, Berger wrote. The subjects they taught depended on what the Ranch residents knew, and included reading, writing, arithmetic, arts and crafts, blacksmithing and bicycle repair. But even when it came to education, the adults in the counterculture communes Berger studied tried to make the children responsible for learning.

Kahn grew up attending the Farm's school, where the kids called teachers by their first names. Since the teachers lived with and knew the children well, they could easily adjust learning styles to fit the students' needs. Kahn remembers his teacher understanding when he needed extra time to learn how to read. In addition to reading, writing and arithmetic, Farm curriculum included farming, solar power, and alternatively interpreted history lessons. The Farm's school even offered extracurricular sports. Kahn was on the track team and traveled to open meets to compete.

Everything, including education practices, changed at the Farm in 1983. The commune had produced some bad crops and inheritance money from the commune residents could no longer keep the community afloat. The Farm had no choice but to place economic responsibility on its members. Dues of \$130 each month per adult were levied and the Farm was forced to begin paying salaries to residents with professional positions such as teachers, doctors and midwives. In order to give the teachers salaries, parents had to pay for their kids

to attend the Farm school. Many couldn't afford the fees, and students like Kahn were bussed 40 minutes to the nearest public school.

Kahn found public school notably different than the Farm's school. "You could be disrespected more in the other [public] school," he said. Paddling kids was a common discipline in rural Tennessee public schools. "The teachers had this attitude that the kids were forced to be at school," Kahn said. They thought kids should keep their mouths shut and not express their views.

"Public school made me feel stupid," Kahn continued. The testing style was different, and the Farm school hadn't taught him lessons about Christopher Columbus or fairy tales. Kahn remembers being puzzled by a question on a test about seven dwarves.

Alive Polarity Fellowship, where Johnson grew up, had a Montessori school, which respects children's differences. Johnson remembers going on lots of field trips, including a trip to Mexico when she was in fifth grade, where she got to climb pyramids. The students also learned the metric system, because the commune was thinking about relocating to New Zealand.

When her family left Alive Polarity in 1989, Johnson started seventh grade in Kalispell. Compared to Alive Polarity's school, the public school went on few field trips, making learning dull, Johnson said. She was asked out to the first dance of the school year, but didn't go and as a result never became part of the "in" crowd, she said. She made friends with older, more mature students, and joined the debate team, which helped her make her own community.

Johnson is now a married mother of two and said she wants an education for her toddler son similar to hers at Alive Polarity. In addition to managing Mountain Valley Foods, she's trying to start a Waldorf school in Kalispell. Like Montessori schools, Waldorf

education allows the teacher to play a nurturing role to the students by moving through the grades with them, teaching the same students from kindergarten through high school. The schools are also much less structured than public school, and allow kids extra time to learn if needed. “The structural form of learning is a waste of time,” Johnson said. “There’s so much fluff. School takes the child away from the parent. Waldorf allows a parental person in the child’s life.”

Weisner found that although some of the counterculture children in his study lived in unstable environments, with single parents, unmarried parents, frequent change, lower incomes, and discrimination from others about their lifestyle – which are considered a hindrance to academic achievement – most got better grades and scored higher on their SATs compared to the conventional children in his comparison group. The children who achieved best academically came from families with stronger commitments to their counterculture lifestyle. And the counterculture children who did less well in school had grades similar to those in two-parent, conventional families. Children with stable families also tended to get better grades regardless of whether or not they had two parents. Initially, Weisner said he thought the children would do the same or worse in school because of the higher level of single parents, divorce, and prejudice from others towards their lifestyle. He concluded: “Parents who chose a family life-style *because it had a coherent cultural meaning for them* might not have children at educational risk (emphasis in original).”

Weisner’s research was based on the students’ math and reading grades provided by teachers in grades one, two and six as well as standardized intelligence testing at 6 months, 1, 1 ½, 2, 3, 4 ½, 6, 9 and 12 years. He made no mention of the type of schooling in which the children participated, although the fact that they took the SATs, took conventional courses

like math and reading, and received grades, indicates they may have attended conventional schools.

It was the “*quality* of life-style that matters for school outcomes... rather than simply the *state* of being single or unmarried by itself (emphasis in original)” that made the counterculture children excel in school, Weisner wrote. “The quality of a life-style can offer protection from risk, and values commitments are among the qualities that can offer such protection to families and children.”

Also, contrary to the notion that counterculture families were “laid-back” and not interested in achieving, Weisner found that the families strived to reach “moderately difficult, challenging goals.” These goals included counterculture values, like achieving inner harmony, personal peace and understanding, religious salvation, non-materialism, artistic and musical expression, political changes and environmentalism. Counterculture families in Weisner’s study rarely strived for high salaries, career status, or test scores and grades, which was more common among the traditional families in his study.

The counterculture parents were also more open with their children and talked to them about their values and goals, which is an asset to academic achievement, Weisner wrote. And counterculture parents were more involved with their children’s school as a form of activism.

“Considering the often highly unusual life-styles of many of these families, their economic difficulties, family changes, and so forth, the overall success in school of the children in these life-styles is notable,” Weisner, concluded.

Vitucci, who grew up in a remote cabin, looked forward to going to school because days at home were spent doing chores. One morning her parents’ car wouldn’t start, even after the usual process of detaching the car battery and warming it up inside the cabin and

reattaching it. Vitucci's mom announced to her daughter: "You're not going to school today." Perhaps the thought of staying home and chopping wood in below zero temperatures, kneading bread and baking it in the wood stove, and fetching water from a nearby creek for dishes didn't appeal to Vitucci. Or maybe something exciting was happening at school that day, she said, because she was determined to get there. Vitucci's bicycle, parked outside the cabin, was iced over and wouldn't budge, so she boiled water on the wood stove and poured it over the bicycle until it was free. Then she pedaled three miles in the freezing cold to their neighbor's house to catch a ride to school.

School was always difficult for Sherman, who was born during her parents' motorcycle trip and later moved to Montana with her single father. She was diagnosed with attention deficit disorder and dyslexia in middle school. Her stepsister Angel, who is one year younger, always got straight A's and now attends Yale University, making it even harder for Sherman. The girls went to Seeley Lake High School until Sherman started 10th grade, when they started going to Hellgate High School in Missoula because the education at Seeley Lake wasn't challenging enough for Angel. Sherman admits that at Seeley Lake she got away with drinking whiskey during her classes and not doing her schoolwork because she was a track star. At Hellgate, Sherman got help with her learning disorders and participated in hands-on education like the Ecology Project International program in Costa Rica, where she worked with sea turtles. "I learned there is so much world and wildlife and I want to be a part of it," she said.

Sherman's stepbrother Hammond had a more unstable childhood, attending eight different schools in several states until he was 17. When Hammond was 9 and 10, his mother also attempted to home school him with help from a school correspondence course while they traveled around, living out of their van while she was an advocate for American Indians. But

she was so busy that she rarely followed the schoolwork. When Sherman started living with his dad in Las Cruces, N. M., he should have started sixth grade, but he was at a fifth-grade level. They lived in a rough neighborhood, but Hammond said he liked living in a house and having his own room, rather than sharing the van with his mom. "It felt normal," he said. Hammond enjoyed the routine of school. He started getting C's, but soon got better grades.

Children of the Counterculture Faced Prejudice

The children of the counterculture who didn't live on communes with like-minded people had to deal with stereotyping when they were kids because they were different from their classmates. Duson said some of her friends were not allowed to play at her house because she lived on "the north side of the tracks" and she looked like a hippie child with her dirty cutoffs, while the other girls wore "cute, little girl clothes." One teacher pigeonholed Duson because of the way she looked and where she lived. She said Duson "would never be very bright." For a while, Duson didn't do well in school, but by fifth grade she gained more confidence and started getting A's and B's.

Sherman's dad and stepmother were active in the Seeley Lake community where they lived and stepmother Feather was a substitute teacher. Her parents built snow sculptures during the community's winter festival and gave kids hayrides in the fall. Sherman's dad let her ride in the decorated sidecar of his motorcycle during Seeley Lake parades. Sherman said she's sure everyone talked about how different they were, but she never felt direct prejudice.

Vitucci also didn't get teased a lot about the way she lived, but she suspects that her classmates talked. "Some people thought when I came home from school I changed into a caveman suit and hunted for bunnies," she jokes. But when she did have friends over they had fun sledding outdoors and cuddling up in the cabin drinking hot cocoa.

Counterculture families weren't always accepted in mainstream culture, but tolerance and acceptance of others was often an important value for the counterculture parents. Hammond's mother brought him to Rainbow Family Gatherings so he could meet a broad range of people. She said it was an inexpensive and convenient way for him to learn about other cultures and religions. Hammond also attended diverse schools, one with mostly Latino kids in New Mexico and another in Illinois with a large black community where racial tensions were high. "It gives you a broader understanding of different people," Hammond said. "It makes you not so single minded."

Caught Between the Counterculture and Mainstream Culture

Adjusting to mainstream culture was often difficult for children of the counterculture as they grew up, especially those who didn't see much of the conventional world. Born and raised on the Farm, Kahn rarely sampled mainstream culture until he was in seventh grade, when his parents moved to Missoula. Kahn's parents had the job of promoting the Farm and traveled throughout the United States, many times with their kids in tow, allowing Kahn to see more of mainstream life than most Farm kids. He remembers the unfamiliarity of having to look both ways before crossing the street when he traveled to big cities.

Kahn had long hair until he was 10 or 11, but by the time he started public school he rebelled against Farm life and wanted to be a "normal" pre-teen. "I wanted to be an individual, but it was the opposite," he said. What he thought was normal life—eating soybeans and roaming the Farm acres often unsupervised—was actually contrary to mainstream culture. Kahn experimented with diet, normal appearances and conversations. At public school, he hid the fact that he lived on the Farm, avoiding conversation with his peers

about his home life and hiding his vegetarianism. “I don’t know how many knew I was on the Farm,” he said.

Despite living in an isolated cabin with none of the conveniences of her classmates at Butte High School, Vitucci maintained the appearance of a normal teenager. She kept her hair in place with hairspray and curled her bangs with a propane curling iron every morning. She went to the mall and watched movies with her friends. But at home Vitucci didn’t have a television, telephone or a hot shower. One friend in particular would “rescue” her almost every weekend and they would talk on the phone and rent movies. Vitucci took advantage of the opportunity to take a real shower instead of a sponge bath whenever she stayed there, she said.

After high school, Vitucci went to the University of Montana in Missoula and lived in the dorms. “I was miserable,” she said. “Phones were always ringing and I could hear the train going by.” She missed hearing the rush of the creek outside her window and seeing the stars. During Vitucci’s first year of college she spent a lot of time on the campus’s Kim Williams Trail next to the Clark Fork River.

The Counterculture Could Hurt

Even though Weisner’s research indicated that children reared with counterculture values were, for the most part, successful as young adults, he was quick to point out that not every counterculture child had a positive experience. “The counterculture would be seriously misunderstood... if viewed solely as a collection of positive values, freeing ideologies, radical politics, self-expansion, tribe-like cohesion, and spiritualism—as do recent videos, and film series, and some of these commentators suggest,” Weisner wrote. “There were darker sides to the counterculture. Under its broad scope countercultural groups and those

claiming to be under its umbrella could be violent, grotesque, health endangering, exploitative, sometimes sexist, and cruel to family members. The counterculture could and did *hurt* (emphasis in original).” He found that some parents regretted some of their choices.

Radle’s mother was 18, single, and still in high school when Radle was born. Social workers put Radle in foster care for the first two weeks of her life while her mother thought about whether she wanted to raise her child. The young mother ultimately chose to keep her baby and moved in with Radle’s paternal grandmother, because her own parents wanted nothing to do with her. “Those two weeks apart and my mother’s ambivalence regarding my birth affected our bond,” Radle said.

A few months later, her mother—wearing a white, crocheted mini-dress—married a man who for much of Radle’s life would be her father. Radle, now 34 with a child of her own, romanticizes her counterculture childhood and claims it influenced her own counterculture practices. “They (Radle’s parents’ friends) were a bunch of young 20-somethings playing music, smoking pot, playing cards, laughing and talking,” she said.

But Radle knows even the early years weren’t always happy for her parents. Much of the responsibility of raising a child was placed on her 18-year-old mother, who worked full time to support her child and new husband. Radle’s father spent most of his time traveling with the band, hanging out with friends, smoking pot and playing cards. “The people around her lived free lives, experimenting, doing drugs, and she had to be responsible,” Radle explained. According to Radle, her mother’s stress and resentment caused her to physically and emotionally abuse her as a child. Although abuse is not a typical counterculture characteristic, it did occur.

In a required paper Radle recently wrote to complete her master’s degree in counseling, she describes her mother’s behavior. “She was often angry,” she wrote. “She

yelled frequently and was sometimes violent. I don't think she had the emotional maturity to care for a young child, especially a willful one with behavioral issues.

"I was frequently punished, quite often physically and out of anger," Radle continued. "I took to tiptoeing around my mother, trying to gauge her moods. Outside the home I became a solitary, withdrawn child. I did well and rarely had problems in school, but I felt like I was always in trouble at home, could never do anything right." Radle said she doesn't blame her mother for the violence, and knows it was an ignorant reaction from a stressed, teenage mother.

Coincidentally, Duson's mother was not physically and emotionally there for her daughter. Duson's fun-loving father died on Earth Day in 1980, when Duson was just 5. Duson went to school that day and remembers that her teacher held her while she cried. "She taught me what I needed," Duson said. "I did not have it (affection) in my life for many years." Duson said her mother never hugged or touched her. Her father had been the affectionate parent.

Counterculture Commitment Affects Identity and Outcome

The parents in Weisner's study who continued to feel a strong commitment to counterculture values produced young adults who identified more with their parents' values. These children also did better in school, had fewer behavior problems, and wanted to contribute to society. The children fared worse if their parents' commitment to the counterculture declined as they aged. For instance, some of the parents with a declining commitment to counterculture had used drugs heavily, and when they stopped they no longer felt a connection to the movement.

“Counterculture parents seem to have successfully transferred many of their ideals to their children,” Weisner wrote. “Furthermore, the parents with a sustained generational identity more often had teens with values similar to their own than did those parents with declining identities.”

Still, the counterculture families in Weisner’s study changed more than the conventional sample families. After 18 years, 73 percent of the conventional parents were still married, while in the counterculture families only 39 percent of the original single mothers, 36 percent of social contract couples, and 14 percent living in communes were still in their original family arrangements.

Even though most of the counterculture families changed, “many of the young parents who began as participants in our study in the 1970’s still are largely liberal, progressive, feisty, experimental, quirky, and still going against—countering—society,” Weisner wrote. “Others have regrets about their countercultural experiences and feel that it put them and their children on difficult pathways later in life, or exacerbated other problems in their lives concerning drugs or mental health. Many are still making a lasting impact on society at midlife, and hope that their own children will carry on their ideals.”

The exception was that counterculture children in Weisner’s study tended to be more materialistic than their parents, probably because they were influenced by mainstream society. Also, the counterculture teens who achieved better grades in school and had fewer behavior problems were more achievement- and goal-oriented. Weisner was surprised to find many of the counterculture parents also had long-term goals and were achievement-driven. These were typically not counterculture values.

While many parents wanted their children to retain their counterculture values, they also wanted their teens to have their own generational identity. One counterculture mother in

Weisner's study was amused and discouraged by her son's generation. "I notice there's a segment of today's kids who are wandering off to Grateful Dead concerts, smoking a lot of pot," she said. "And I think 'Oh, don't do that'; I mean I know it's a lot of fun, but it's so unoriginal for one thing."

Vitucci is an example of a child of the counterculture who achieved in school and life, possibly because of her parents' commitment to their unconventional values. Vitucci didn't live in mainstream society until she pursued her fine arts degree at the University of Montana in Missoula. Her parents had planned to live in a remote cabin for a few years and save enough money to buy a place of their own, but the solitude of the property was to their liking—and it prevented them from working in town as much as they had before. Cars would often not start in Butte's minus-40-degree temperatures, and the daily activities of life, such as cooking, cleaning and staying warm, took up most of their time. Vitucci wants to return to her counterculture roots, living remotely, when she starts a family. "It's important for kids to be in the natural environment," she said. "I would choose to raise a child that way—close to nature."

Instability Equals Negative Outcomes for Counterculture Children

Along with a declining commitment to the counterculture, instability was the biggest factor in preventing success among the children Weisner studied. Medical students Johnston and Deisher also found that communes with lower turnover rates proved to be better for children's stability. And Kshama Ferrar, who researched family issues in 60 communes and published her findings in the 1982 book "Alternative Lifestyles," found that instability and turnover could be extremely upsetting for children.

Weisner compared the counterculture era to the Great Depression of the 1930s. He said sons had a harder time than daughters in both eras. But it wasn't finances that caused difficulties in counterculture children; it was the unpredictability of their family life. The difference between the Great Depression and the counterculture is that hippies were accustomed to economic hardship and did not want material possessions.

Hammond's unstable upbringing has caused him to seek a more mainstream adulthood. "I look back and think I wouldn't raise my kids that way," he said. "I'd prefer to raise my kids more in a white picket fence style, not quite so exposed." He said there were always different characters "rambling in" to stay with his family and he never knew how long they would be there.

Hammond was born just 11 months after his parents met at the first Rainbow Family Gathering in Colorado. They bought some land in southwestern New Mexico and his dad worked as a miner for Anaconda Copper Co. to make ends meet. "It pushed him over the edge," Hammond's mother said. The work reminded him of his service in Vietnam and he developed delayed-stress syndrome, contributing to his abusive behavior. The last straw came when Hammond's father punched Hammond's mother in her ear so hard that it permanently deafened her. They split after being together for 10 years.

After their breakup, Hammond lived in a two-story bus with his mom and half-sister Tracy, who is nine years older and was "like a mother" to Hammond. "We'd always be going places," Hammond said. They would sleep in their van, but sometimes stay with people and sleep on their couches. On Hammond's 10th birthday, his mom met a guy at a bar and they stayed at his house. The guy let Hammond sleep on his waterbed since it was his birthday.

Hammond also recalls being teased about looking like a hippie by some kids at a BMX track in Tucson, Ariz. "I was dressed all raggedy," Hammond said. "I did yearn for a normal lifestyle when I was traveling around. I wished I was the kid with the dirt bike."

Hammond finished high school in New Mexico, living with his dad. Afterwards, he got an apartment with a friend when his dad decided to move to another city for a job. Hammond had various jobs in the next few years, ranging from working construction and on fire crews to waiting tables and delivering pizzas. Hammond enrolled in the University of New Mexico when he was 21, with plans to study architecture or engineering. He lasted one and a half semesters before the stress of taking 12 credits, working at UPS to support himself, and a substance abuse problem forced him to drop out. He had started doing cocaine excessively. "I was dealing with un-dealt-with issues," he adds. "My parents' split was rough."

After dropping out of college, Hammond went to a Rainbow Family Gathering in New Mexico with his mother. He pulled out of his "self-centered thing" and kept it together for a while, his mother said. He ended up in Missoula, close to his mother, her new husband, and her other children: 10-years-younger stepsister Ashlea, 11-years-younger half-sister Angel, and 16-years-younger half-brother Rio.

Hammond said his younger siblings had a more stable childhood than his. "After my younger sister Angel was born, my mom moved here and got a place," he said. "Angel got to go to one elementary school and one high school. I went to eight schools." Hammond said drugs were never around when Angel was a kid. But, he said, family instability was probably even worse for his older sister Tracy, who now lives in Seattle and works as a massage therapist. "[Hammond is] the most unstable of any of the kids," Hammond's mother said. In contrast, his sister Angel has succeeded academically and is a sophomore at Yale.

Hammond's stepsister Ashlea Wolf Sherman also had an unstable childhood, but she has a more positive attitude about her upbringing, probably because she's younger and her settled teenage years seemed to have kept her grounded. Sherman was born in Fall River Mills, Calif., during her parents' West coast motorcycle trip. A few weeks later her mother tucked the newborn into her leather jacket and they headed home to Eugene, Ore., where she lived for the first seven years of her life. Her parents planted trees for a living, but soon her immature mother was taking off with new boyfriends that Sherman said must have been "more exciting" than her father. Her mother had legal custody of Sherman, but her father raised her, with her mom just coming back to breastfeed the baby at first.

When Sherman was a bit older, she moved with her father to Jim's Ranch, a commune outside of Eugene. Jim's land was filled with old-growth trees and rabbits he saved from pet stores. Sherman remembers caring for Jim's horses and rabbits and building forts in the hayloft of his barn. Her father took care of the stables in exchange for a room, which ranged from tipis and buses to yurts and rickety old shacks. "I assumed all kids lived in busses," Sherman said.

Sherman's mother stayed in her life during the early years. She would sometimes pick Sherman up and take her to school, first treating her to a large cinnamon roll from Great Harvest Bread Company, a luxury that Sherman's father couldn't afford. Sherman also remembers the thrill of watching movies such as Disney's "Aladdin" when she stayed at her mother's house. But her mother would sneak out to see boyfriends while the movie was on, and sometimes wouldn't return for days. Luckily, Sherman's dad and her older half-brother, Jeremy, would come to her rescue.

Eventually, Sherman's dad gained custody of her, and they threw her bike and clothes in his old van and moved to Seeley Lake in his home state. Sherman looked forward to the

mountains, lakes and horses her father talked about. He quickly got a job as an outfitter in the Bob Marshall Wilderness and met and married Feather, the woman who would become the mother figure in Sherman's life. With Rick and Feather's union, Sherman also gained two stepbrothers, Shawn and Rio, and two stepsisters, Tracy and Angel.

Sherman credits Rick and Feather's support for making her the healthy person she is today. She said she also learned what not to do in relationships from her mother's example. Sherman acknowledges that she would probably be a different person if she had grown up with her mother as her sole parent. "It's taken 20 years for mom to figure out that she's a worthwhile person," Sherman said. And because her father was always honest about her mother's issues, Sherman has never resented her mother's inability to care for her. Today, Sherman said she considers her mother a friend rather than a parent.

While Sherman's parents still consider themselves hippies, many counterculture parents no longer felt a connection to the lifestyle once their children were older. Radle's parents' commitment to the counterculture had declined by the time she was 6. Her memories of visitors teaching her how to play the piano, talking about other exciting places in the world, and giving her sips of their smoothies came to an end.

Her family life also changed frequently. Radle's stepfather started to feel responsibility towards the family after half-sister Amy was born, so they moved to the southwestern United States so he could study physics at DeVry Institute of Technology. By the time Radle's half-brother was born her father had a steady job at a laboratory in Albuquerque, N. M. After years of financial struggle, Radle's parents finally made enough money to buy a house in a middle-class neighborhood, but it didn't make them any happier. "We had food in the cupboards, new school clothes, toys etc., but our parents fought loudly

and regularly,” Radle wrote in her school paper, “My mother and I continued to fight as well.”

Radle’s parents divorced when she was 12 and the family plunged into poverty again. Although her father paid child support, her single mom had to settle for run-down rentals. As the oldest child, Radle took responsibility for her siblings while her mother worked. Radle said she feels guilty that she didn’t adequately care for them even though she was young.

Her mother’s divorce influenced how Radle feels about marriage. She didn’t get married until she was 34 because she saw so many people her mom’s age rush to settle down only to have it not work out. “I believe you should use your 20s to explore,” said Radle, who traveled around the world and was an activist for the environmental organization Earth First! before marrying. “I don’t believe in divorce as a solution to not getting along,” she said. “A lot of people got divorced in the sixties because when it didn’t feel good they would give up. I believe they should have tried harder.”

Now the mother of a 1-year-old, Radle’s parenting philosophy is influenced more by her education than her own upbringing, she said. She realizes that kids need structure. “They thrive when they know what’s coming next,” Radle said.

Duson’s life also became unstable after her father died of cancer. Her mother married a man with substance abuse problem. “My family life was all consuming,” she said. She just wanted to get away from her mother and stepfather, so she went to Kent Preparatory School in Connecticut. Duson was lucky; the trust fund her father left her allowed Duson to get away from her unstable, dysfunctional household. “I was able to get out of my depression to some degree,” she said.

The Children Have Grown Up

Weisner's study ended when the kids turned 18 and he concluded that, for the most part, the teenagers had adopted their parents' values and goals. A strong commitment to counterculture values was positive for teenagers and their parents as they faced "the often difficult tasks of life," Weisner wrote.

No other research has been done on the adults who were raised in counterculture environments. "More research is needed on this topic and since these infants and toddlers are now adults themselves, it would be interesting to see if communal living has had any long term impact on their identities," Smith wrote in "Families and Communes." Sociologist Miller wrote in "The 60s Communes: Hippies and Beyond" that he could only speculate about the long-term effects of being raised on a commune. "Interviewees in the 60s Communes Project who grew up in the communes generally had rosy memories of their halcyon years in the cultural vanguard, with plenty of playmates, exposure to slices of the culture that most children never got to see, and endless adventures," he wrote. "Many have gone on to advanced education and successful careers; on the whole no downside to communal upbringing is readily apparent, and many are proud of their communal past, even if they are not planning to repeat it. Quite a few have taken exception to their past in one way, however: by changing unusual names... Even Lou Gottlieb's son Vishnu changed his name to Bill." (Gottlieb founded the Morning Star Ranch, a commune in California.)

When the Farm starting requiring that members pay dues, 80 percent of the Farm's population of 1,500 left, including Kahn and parents. Kahn's parents' "four marriage" also ended; Kahn's dad, stepmother and stepsiblings moved to nearby Nashville, Tenn., and Kahn moved with his mom, stepfather, brother and sister to Missoula. They lived in a normal house, and for the first time Kahn had his own room. He attended Hellgate High School and

said he was a normal teenager, getting into trouble with drinking and fights. His stepfather finished his degree at the University of Montana and got a job in the university's news and publications department, where he worked for more than 20 years before recently retiring. Kahn's mother worked in real estate and other business ventures.

Kahn studied communications and philosophy at the University of Montana in Missoula, but never finished. He said he never could decide on a conventional career. Today, Kahn records live music for bands and has been involved in grassroots cooperatives, organizing concerts and parties. Missoula's Barnburner party every Halloween was Kahn's brainchild, with the notion that it would involve students and the community. He said he gravitates towards projects with large goals, probably because on the Farm everyone had lofty goals.

Kahn goes back to the Farm reunion every Fourth of the July weekend to reconnect with old friends. Some of those people are now corporate lawyers, some work for MTV and Hollywood; and some work on political and social issues, Kahn said.

The Johnsons lived with at least 80 other adults at the Alive Polarity Fellowship until 1989, two years after the media reported that the commune founder was having an alleged affair with a married woman and the community was several hundreds of thousands dollars in debt. Half of the members, including the Johnson family, remained faithful to the commune while the others left, some filing lawsuits against Alive Polarity. The Johnsons returned to Kalispell when Patricia Johnson was in seventh grade. She managed to avoid the high school cliques at Flathead High School and made friends with the more mature, older students.

After high school, Johnson went to Northwest Community College in Wyoming, where she met her husband. She was anxious about telling him about her upbringing, but he was fine with it. "It's hard to relate to people the depth of it," she said. "I'm not embarrassed,

it's just hard to have people understand it." After graduating, the couple moved to Minnesota, his home state, but Johnson grew homesick for her family and friends, so when her father asked her to manage Mountain Valley Foods while he took time off to pursue his continuing interest in polarity, Johnson returned with her husband to Kalispell.

Johnson is now part owner of the 18-year-old store. She recently moved it to a larger building and added organic meat and eggs, beer and wine, and health products. Her parents don't believe in profiting from meat and alcohol, but Johnson said the change is helping the business survive. She said her childhood at Alive Polarity has given her an empowering business sense and good social skills.

Johnson is trying to start a Waldorf school with some other mothers. The moms have also discussed communal living. Johnson's husband is against it, and she isn't sure either. "I like having people around and I have good social skills," she said. "But I don't know if I could go into a community setting again. I like my own space and [I like] to control space around me."

Duson practices massage therapy in Missoula and trains horses in Hamilton. She said she struggled to settle on a career, with ideas ranging from architecture, like her father, to counseling. She would like to have children someday, but only in a committed relationship "when we really love each other." She said she believes humor and joy should be included in early childhood. "I want them [my children] to know they are loved, that they belong," she said.

Duson's mother is now married to her fourth husband, whom Duson said is also an alcoholic. Duson describes her mother as still "a hippie at heart." She recently bought an earthworm farm on the Texas coast. Duson admits she feels closer to her mother now and has learned to accept her mother's lack of affection.

Radle's parents moved to New Mexico when she was a child, but after high school, she went to the University of Montana in Missoula. Radle, her husband and their 1-year-old son have settled in Missoula, a place where much of the community thinks alike and thinks liberal, a place where Radle said she feels comfortable wearing no makeup and letting her hair flow freely. "Missoula is a good place for children of former hippies to live," Radle said. "You can be countercultural and feel like you fit in. There are lots of like-minded people here."

Radle recently finished her master's degree in counseling, which caused her to think about her abusive childhood. Radle forgave her mother for the abuse, coming to terms with the fact that she was a young, inexperienced mother, but Radle's mother denied the abuse. They have agreed not to talk about it. "It's good that we don't argue," Radle said. "But we're not very honest."

Vitucci said it took two years at the University of Montana before she was used to living with water, phones and electricity. A photography major in college, Vitucci's most prized possession is now a \$2,300 laptop where she can manipulate her photos taken of adventures: in Grenada, where she lived and studied for six months; Nepal, where she led a high school group to the foothills of Mount Everest; and Alaska, where she led sea kayaking trips for a summer. The Missoula apartment Vitucci shared with her boyfriend of four years resembled the photographs of her childhood cabin. Both were cozy and cluttered with art, blankets, comfy chairs, sewing machines, willow furniture made by her stepfather, and photos of family, friends and adventures.

Vitucci recently moved to Douglas, Alaska, with her boyfriend, so he could go to graduate school. Her mother and stepfather are no longer together, but he still lives in the

cabin outside of Butte. “In five years I’d like to be living in the country,” she said, and adds she’d live in a cabin like the one she grew up.

Hammond works for a contractor in Missoula and hopes to get his contractor’s license so he can have his own business some day. “I work way too much, but I like what I do,” he said. He said he wants to “get married, have a family, work my tail off, buy a place and fix it up.” He’s been with his girlfriend, whom he met on a blind date, for over a year and they live together in a townhouse.

Hammond sees his dad, who still works as a carpenter in New Mexico, about once a year. He sees his mom and siblings more frequently in nearby Clinton. They go camping, fishing and swimming together, he said. His parents are still committed to the counterculture, but Rainbow Family Gatherings are not important enough for him to take time off work. Potlucks, he said, are the most collective thing he does these days. “There’s been some rough times,” he admits. “But most of it was good. It opened my eye at a young age.”

Hammond’s mom has been married to Sherman’s dad for more than 10 years. But the stepsiblings never lived together and their 10-year age difference has given them different perspectives on their counterculture upbringings. Sherman describes her childhood as “spoiled,” although her parents never had a lot of money. “I got to hear stories, go on adventures, hang out with family and friends,” she said.

At 21, Sherman is still discovering who she is. “I want to travel and explore to find out who I am,” she said. “I’ve had a lot of experiences, but not enough. I don’t know what to do with my life, but I’ll get there.” For now, she works part-time with disabled adults in Missoula and plans to work for the Forest Service in Bozeman this summer to explore her interest in the conservation field.

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If my parents had been among Weisner's subjects, he would have found that they started out as a social contract family, but got married soon after I was born. After having another daughter two and a half years later, they went their separate ways and divorced when I was 4. My parents remained active in my life, retaining joint custody of my sister and me. When I was 12, the poor real estate market in upstate New York forced my father to move his construction business to Los Angeles, leaving Mom a single parent back in New York.

Certainly, Weisner would have considered our family somewhat unstable. He would have also found that they felt committed to counterculture values like a liberal political attitude, concern for the environment, and organic and vegetarian diets. In contrast, they both owned nice homes and decent vehicles, and they gave my younger sister and me everything we needed and almost everything we wanted. They were there for us, emotionally and materially. They also wanted us to get good grades in high school, participate in extra-curricular clubs and competitive sports, and get into prestigious colleges. They were committed to counterculture values, with the exception of materialism and achievement goals. This is consistent with Weisner's conclusions that counterculture families who value materialism and conventional achievement, as well as other counterculture ideals, produce children with positive outcomes. These children also tend to identify more with their parents' counterculture values.

At times my parents' divorced status, my father's waist-length braid and penchant for vintage motorcycles, and my mother's young, spirited looks and healthy and unusual cooking, made me feel different in the small, conservative town where we lived. At friends' birthday parties the parents grudgingly made me peanut butter and jelly sandwiches on white bread while everyone else munched on the hamburgers and hot dogs after I meekly told them I was a vegetarian. I was one of only a handful of students who voted for Walter Mondale in

a mock 1984 presidential election in elementary school. I remember my mother allowing my sister and me to curse at home as long as we promised not to say any four-letter words at school. As I grew older I was no longer shy about the differences between my family and my peers; I became proud of my family's unique values.

Teenagers often struggle to come to terms with their own identities, and I wasn't any different. I tried being preppy, a punk rocker and a hippie chick—all within four years of high school. By senior year I had gone back to my counterculture roots. The scent of patchouli wafted through my institutional high school as I walked through the hallways. I tried to share my sprout and cheese sandwiches with friends in the lunchroom (even though they usually spit it out!), and I voiced my feminist and vegetarian beliefs in a regular column in the school newspaper.

By the time I started college, many of my counterculture values had become mainstream. Plenty of my friends maintained vegetarian diets, wore long, Indian-print dresses and patchouli oil. I connected with others who considered themselves feminists, environmentalists and liberals. But I no longer felt the need to outwardly express my counterculture beliefs—perhaps because they didn't seem so unique anymore—and I settled on being down-to-earth.

I'm still concerned about the things my parents began to care about in the 1960s. I don't live remotely without the comforts of running water and electricity, but I choose to live in an older home within city limits so I can walk or take the bus. I'm concerned about conserving our natural resources, pollution problems, and recycling initiatives just like my parents were in the 1960s, but I'm taking a different approach. I also choose to eat organically and nutritiously; I use homeopathic remedies instead of Western medicine when possible. I breastfed my son, and my husband and I co-sleep with him, as my parents did with

me. Maybe I'm not as much of an activist as my parents, but being socially responsible is important to me. I enjoy supporting environmental, arts, women's, and health organizations through memberships and volunteering.

I made these choices because of my parents' influence, but also because of societal influences. Recent health and environmental studies have proven that many of the lifestyle choices of the counterculture were good ones. We're now finding that it's better to eat organic foods. Pediatricians recommend breastfeeding and natural health remedies, while 30 years ago they pushed formula and antibiotics. And studies suggest the increasing problems with landfill, air pollution, and global warming are real.

Parents of counterculture children have influenced more than just their offspring. "Indeed, they had many successes with their experiments and innovations, which have subsequently diffused so widely throughout American society that few remember when these practices were not normative or at least an accepted variant to the norm," Weisner wrote.