

COURIER-POST

# The Way We Live

A daily look  
into the  
lives and times of  
South Jersey's people

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HEALTH FOODS ARE PACKED for the trip. Low caboose at right contains clothes.



PATTI AND ALAN STAHL carry metal bathtub to their brightly painted home on wheels.

## Two on the Road— To an Off-Beat Lifestyle

By KATHLEEN A. ROWLEY  
Courier-Post Staff

Patti and Alan Stahl with their rat terrier, "Shawn," left South Jersey yesterday in a 1967 pickup truck with a small, brightly painted, home-made house atop it bound for California "to learn to live off the land."

Making their own clothes, growing their own food, preparing their own medicines—and generally leading their lives as elements of the kind of lifestyle Patti, 38, and Alan, 31, say they seek. Nine-to-five jobs, mortgage, house and car payments are characteristic of the lifestyle the young couple—married in Vineland last July—reject.

"I don't like paying other people to do things I can do myself," Alan, a former Rutgers-New Brunswick student, explained the day before he and Patti, with about \$800 in their pockets, took off in their multi-hued house-truck.

"If you spend all your energy on a full-time job you don't have the energy to do the direct things that keep you alive like growing your own food, and making your own clothes, and making your own dyes, and making your own light, and making your own medicine," he said.

And, if you don't do these "direct things" for yourself, added Alan, sitting on a trunk alternately shelling hickory nuts and playing with a metal tape measure, "you get out of touch with God and what God made for us. You get out of touch with the land... a part of God—a big part of God."

**Future Plans**  
Eventually, say Alan and Patti in tall, attractive girl with long, flowing brown hair who got a high school equivalency diploma after dropping out of Gateway Regional High School, Woodbury Heights, they want to settle down and become organic farmers, possibly in Canada—definitely where land is cheap and people are few.

Meantime, they say, they're off to learn about "everything"—about people, the world, crafts, organic farming, themselves... life in general.

How will they learn such things? "You can learn from books and you can learn from other people—mostly from other people...," Alan explained. "It's not hard to meet anyone you want to meet. You just go up to them and start talking to them. Just

'hello' is a good beginning. And you can always have little things to trade with them—trade things inside your mind with things inside their minds."

The 1967 Ford pickup truck they're off in cost them \$100. Patti and Alan invested another \$800 or so into equipping the truck to serve as a "home."

With the help of Patti's father (a retired Navy officer) and of friends, the couple built a "house" atop the base of the green and white truck. The house—painted white, yellow, purple and with a yellow crescent moon brushed onto its purple arched door—is five feet three inches high, six feet long and four-and-a-half feet wide.

It is equipped with a wall cabinet Alan and Patti scavenged to hold their stock of foods—to perishables but lots of other items like natural vitamins, wheat germ, lentils, wild rice, sun flower seeds and pancake mixes made from wholewheat flour and soybeans.

**Vegetarian Diet**  
Alan is a vegetarian and explains his practice by paraphrasing a story author Richard Albert told. The story is about the man who could not kill a chicken where no one could see him because everywhere he went he found that "the chicken sees."

The foods Alan and Patti will eat will be cooked over a stove they have stored in the truck. (They're also got an old-fashioned metal bathtub and a washboard to care for other fundamental needs.)

Most of their clothes are stored in storage space built onto one interior wall of the "house." Some would say the garments were of a "hippie" type. Patti and Alan wore each other's clothing; say succinctly the apparel is "comfortable."

(He is not, says Alan, "a hippie.") "There's no sense 'm getting hung up on labels like that. Be just what you are. I'm just me. I'm a person.")

On the truck floor is a gray carpet—found among the items stored in the garage of the home of Patti's parents (Mr. and Mrs. Paul T. Cook of Westville) had stayed with the Cooks following the July 30 wedding where the young people and they loved each other and promised to care for each other.

"We can't make any promises for lifelong love," Alan explained. "be-



PICK-UP TRUCK ROOF holds storage box and spare tire.

cause it might not work. You know, love changes.")

**Book Collection**  
Also among the supplies Patti and Alan took with them were nearly 20 trunks full of books—many on works by authors like James Joyce, John Steinbeck, and Herman Hesse—and as varied in content as the Bible, Gestalt psychology, yoga and nursery rhymes.

Sewing and decorating materials, crafts-making equipment, all paints, wood carving and jewelry making tools are also among the things the Stahls are carrying with them into the California woods.

It will not be their first trip to that state. Patti once lived there. And Alan spent the winter of 1970-71 with five other young people in a cabin in the woods in Broadside near Santa Cruz.

Speaking of that venture, Alan recalled: "We just liked to have fun. We did everything we could think of to have fun—swinging in trees, having

cookie parties... We celebrated all the time—Ground Hog Day, all the holy days—anything we could find to celebrate..."

And he added: "we had a hauling business. But the area was economically depleted and there wasn't much money around... We were on the government food program. We got flour and cheese and powdered milk and we got some rice... We didn't know much about taking care of ourselves. So we never had any money and we never had any good food and I came back in (that) spring because I thought I wanted to continue my college education..."

Of the venture which Patti and Alan launched yesterday, the slender youth in the paint-splattered overalls and the faded green levis with a red patch on the right knee, laid this to say laughingly:

"We might find we don't like it. We could. We could find that what we'd like to live in New York City. But that's not going to happen. Might is a pretty strong word."

"I MIGHT turn into a strawberry in a minute..."

## Never Underestimate Political Female

By WILLIAM BRINGLE  
Courier-Post Staff

MIAMI BEACH — This is a tale of two extraordinary women.

Each occupies almost exactly the opposite attitude of her party—one a Union Republican, the other a "new politics" Democratic.

Both would great influence on the platform of the two national parties. Each was a leader in one of the special committees that shaped her party's platform.

Both are from the same small state of Vermont. Each believes that women should get into politics at an early age.

And about them, the similarity ends.

Mildred B. Harwood, 58, is a doctor's wife, a mother, a registered nurse, a lifelong organization Republican, a Vermont state legislator and wife of an insurance CEO. She is now serving, for the first time, on the executive committee writing the Republican national platform here this week.

She did not succeed in getting her platform, article submitted, passed through the national convention. She was defeated, in the first round, by the old-fashioned, but she did not give up. She is now a delegate to the national convention and is now writing the Republican national platform here this week.

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