Contributions to Wisdom

Vol. 3, No. 1

September 1989

DRED

Information, education, & inspiration in the areas of Golistic Gealth & Transformation



Interview

Ken: Frog Holler Farm is our material home base, where we live with our three sons; Billy (12), Kenny (8), and Edwin (4). We're not self-sufficient, but we try to do the most basic, essential things for ourselves; home birthing, home schooling, home healing when we can, and home cultural events.

We didn't mean to be isolated quite so much. We've had to kind of cloister ourselves a little in order to create the mini-culture that we needed to get started as a family. At this point, we've got the farm paid for, and we're going to expand a little bit as far as our spheres of activities and our interests.

We're going to keep growing stuff cause that's basic—it's nothing we're going to move away from, but we're going to try and nourish ourselves in other ways too.

Contributions to Wisdom: Could you say something about some of the values and ideas you have, and why you're here?

Ken: The values that kind of tricked us into coming here, you mean? (laughter). It was pretty much a sixties kind of thing. Holistic living, right livelihood, back to nature, eating good organic food, shying away from a materialistic culture. We haven't changed all that much. Our original ideas and vision were clearly naive—such as a community of just brilliant happy people. However, the farm has been good in a lot of ways that we didn't anticipate.

CTW: Is there a way that your ideals have evolved, like the home schooling?

Cathy: That was an idea I didn't have at all when we came out here, but by the time the kids were born, we had become centered on the farm and in a simpler lifestyle. It seemed that sending the children away for an entire day to a radically different cultural setting represented an obvious contradiction. As the children grew, we realized that we could not give up that precious intimacy with their learning and development.

Ken: Because we are so close to the kids and we deal with them on every issue, we've

learned a lot about how they learn, what nurtures and nourishes them. It's definately not an institutionalized kind of learning. The kids can learn in fantastic ways. They're very creative and quick if they're properly motivated.

CTW: It seems like a lifestyle that is difficult to describe in words, just being here and being on the land.

Cathy: That's just the way we see learning happen. One thing flows into ancontinued on page 6

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Ken & Kathy King are Frog Holler Farm. The farm was started 17 years ago in conjunction with Indian Summer, Ann Arbor's first natural foods restaurant. They now sell organic produce at the local food co-ops and farmer's market. Their sons Billy and Kenny have recently received attention with their muscial performances. This interview was done in two parts, the summers of 1987 and 1989.

Contributions to Wisdom is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to informing, networking, amusing, and inspiring in the areas of Holistic Health and Transformation for the Ann Arbor Community. In addition to publishing this newsletter, (formerly known as Contributions to Wellness) CTW also cosponsors a lecture series on the 2nd and 4th Fridays of each month.

We publish the 1st of the month, 10 times a year. Available free at selected distribution points, and by subscription, \$12 per year U.S.

Please write to Contributions to Wisdom, 3 Keppler Court, Ann Arbor MI 48103, for subscriptions, advertising, and writers guidelines.

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Printed by Partners Press on recycled paper. (Using recycled paper costs less than 1% more than using virgin paper.)

Unless otherwise noted, opinions are those of the author and not necessarily those of CTW or of the editor. Factual errors will be corrected upon notification, other comments are welcome.

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Volunteers Needed

Positive Living Networks, a Michigan organization for people who are HIV-positive (i.e., who are hosting the AIDS virus), is starting an HIV treatment project focusing on nontraditional, alternative or complementary therapies. This would include Asian medicine, mental imaging, nutrition and dietary therapies, and massage and other types of bodywork.

Positive Living Networks has a small group of Ann Arbor/Detroit based bodyworkers who are volunteering to work with this project. They are looking for additional volunteers. There will be a weekend retreat near Ann Arbor November 17, 18, and 19 to introduce the project to interested HIV-positive participants.

If you are interested in helping with the HIV treatment project or refering participants to it contact Max Heirich at 313-668-1008.

From the Editor

Oh, I am nervous. It's been two years of waiting for this current metamorphis of Contributions to Wisdom. Waiting for the moment when it was time to step back into production. Well, it's time.

I'm also excited. The technology has improved, and my ability to work with it. There are about a dozen people involved in putting this together, more than there ever were two years ago.

Not everyone is going to know that Contributions to Wisdom was publishing a few years ago under the name Contributions to Wellness. Why the name change? Partly so that we are identified more strongly with the lecture series which is now in its fourth successful year. And partly because the name broadens the scope of the newsletter.

We use the word wisdom quite humbly, that these pages will contribute to a collective wisdom rather than assume that our knowledge is greater or of more importance than any other wisdom.

I sincerely hope you enjoy what you see. Please wish us success, and as always your opinions and input are welcome.

-Linda Diane Feldt

Using Herbs: Why Tinctures?

-Linda Diane Feldt

Herbs are best when used in season. Dandelion root in spring and fall to nourish the liver, burdock root in the fall to nourish the kidneys and pancreas for the cold to follow, tender spring greens to celebrate the coming of new plant life and our renewal after a dark and cold winter.

As food and as medicine, we would like herbs to be available year round. The methods of preserving herbs are mostly limited to drying, making tinctures or vinegars, making syrup or candy, root cellaring, and — more recently — freezing.

For medicinal purposes, tinctures are especially useful and practical. Once made, the tincture is immediately available; and will keep for years if it is protected from contamination, evaporation, and exposure to light. By contrast, dried herbs begin to lose their potencyalmost immediately and should usually be used within a year of harvest.

Most tinctures can be easily made, or purchased. If purchased, they usually cost five to eight dollars for a two ounce dropper bottle. Tinctures are usually taken 10-15 drops at a time, diluted in water or juice. How often and how much you use will depend on the herb and why you are taking it.

How do you make tinctures? The simplest and easiest method is to choose healthy plants, and to respectfully harvest the plant part you want to use at the time when it is most active and vibrant. This timing will vary with the seasons for roots, flowers, seeds, and leaves. Avoid washing the plant, brush dirt off if necessary.

As soon as possible after harvest, cut or tear the plant into smaller pieces so that more surface areas will have contact with the alcohol. Fill a jar with the plant, up to the top. Then fill the jar with 100 proof alcohol, also up to the top. Tap the jar so trapped air bubbles rise to the surface. Open the jar, release the air, and add more alcohol if needed. Let sit in a dark and quiet place for about 6 weeks.

At the end of six weeks, strain the mixture using cheesecloth or a paper filter. Squeeze the plant material so that all the alcohol is extracted, then compost the plant part. Pour the finished tincture into small dropper bottles or a stock jar to refill dropper bottles. Be sure to label everything! Most tinctures look and smell almost the same after a few weeks!

Simplicity is most effective when using tinctured herbs. Complex formulas often have rare and exotic ingredients which are unnecessary (and expensive) and you won't be able to tell which herbs help. By using one plant at a time, you can discover what plants are particular allies for you and develop a personal relationship with that plant. That may include growing and harvesting the plant for your own use, once you understand its properties and characteristics. The most helpful and powerful herbs are often literally growing next to your door. Motherwort, dandelion, burdock, plaintain, chickweed, and even quack grass are instantly available for or use for a variety of problems and concerns.

A tincture is rarely "better" when it contains the whole plant—leaf, flower, and root. In truth, this often points to sloppy or uninformed harvesting. In a plant like dandelion, if the entire plant was har-

vested and tinctured it would be a weak liver tonic as the root has virtually no medicinal value in the summer as it is flowering. Only in the spring and fall, when the essence of the plant is in the root as it prepares to grow or as it prepares to endure the winter, is the root active enough to tincture.

This is easily demonstrated by tasting the plant at various times. The bitter taste of the dandelion betrays the presence of alkaloids, the medicinal part of this plant. In the spring and fall the bitterness is in the root, while the leaves taste almost sweet. As the plant grows, the leaves take on the bitter flavor and at full flower the plant is inedible except by some diehard dandelion lovers.

My goal in writing this article is to provide information to make the plants more available to us. It is simple, fun, inexpensive, and even messy. For more information I recommend the following books, and of course ifyou are using herbs as medicine please consult a health practitioner. The herbs are powerful allies and deserve our respect and wise use.

For more information:

Healing Wise, Susun S. Weed, Ash Tree Publishing

 $\label{thm:wise-Woman Herbal: for the Childbearing Year, Susun S. Weed, Ash Tree Publishing} \underline{Wise Woman Herbal: for the Childbearing Year, Susun S. Weed, Ash Tree Publishing}$

Tom Brown's Guide to Wild Edible & Medicinal Plants, Tom Brown, Jr., Berkley Books

Witches Heal, Billie Potts, DuReve Publications

Calendar of Events

Friday Sept. 8, 1989 7:30 PM
Zen Lotus Society/ Budhist
Temple: Free Public Talk:
"On Love & Happiness in
Buddhism"by Ven. Samu
Sunim, publisher of Spring
Wind, Budhist journal, organizer of conferences; Zen Buddhism in North America and
World Buddhism in North
America. Zen Master, Buddhist writer and poet. Call
761-6520 for more information.

Friday, Sept. 8, 1989: Contributions to Wsidom Presents: Intimate Partnerships: Making Relationships Work. Manny Schrieber is a licensed Psychologist, Staff Psychologist for the Institute for Psychology and Medicine, and a lecturer at the Univ. of Michigan. Tonight, Dr. Shrieber presents a lecture and practical experience in which the ancient secret incantation to making relationships work will be revealed. At Crazy Wisdom Bookstore, 206 N. Fourth Ave. Tea at 7:30, the talk is 8-9:30. \$3 donation. Seating is limited, bring a cushion if you'd like. Co-sponsored by Crazy Wisdom Bookstore & Contributions to Wisdom Newsletter.

Sept. 14, 1989 Introductory Zen Meditation Courses, Zen Lotus Society/Buddhist Temple, Five Thursdays beginning Sept. 14. The basics of Zen meditation postures, breathing, and concentration and the Buddhist practices of chanting and prostrations in everyday life. \$120/\$100 full time student. Call 761-6520 for more informa-

Sept. 18, 1989
Jesse Richards is offering 5 week classes in Earth Dance, Dancing Awake the Dream and the Voice (for singers) beginning Sept. 18. Call 971-5131 for more information.

tion.

Friday, Sept. 22, 1989: Contributions to Wisdom Presents: Kenny & Tzipora., A special Equinox Concert. Nationally known for their Celtic and Pagan forms of music, this is the first Ann Arbor performance for this duo. A perfect way to experience and to celebrate the Fall Equinox. Please note: because of the large interest in this event, we will be at The Friend's Meeting House, 1416 Hill Street. A \$5.00 donation is asked, tea is at 7:30 and the music begins at 8:00. Co-sponsored by Crazy Wisdom Bookstore and Contributions to Wisdom Newsletter.

Saturday Sept. 23
Woman's Cycles, Women's
Power. A workshop on menstruation: anthropological and historical perspectives, physiology, emotional and spiritual perspectives. Led by Linda Diane Feldt, 1-3PM, sliding scale \$5-15. Call 662-4902 for information and to register.

Monday Sept. 25, 1989 Introduction to Polarity Therapy, 8 week class, \$35. Taught by Linda Diane Feldt, Holistic Health Practitioner through the Ann Arbor- Public Schools Continuing Education Program. Call 662-4902 for more information, 994-2300 to register.

Thursday Sept. 27, 1989
Massage for Couples, 8 week class, \$35. Taught by Linda Diane Feldt, Holistic Health Practitioner through the Ann Arbor Public Schools Continuing Education Program. Call 662-4902 for more information, 994-2300 to register.

Sept. 26, 1989

Zen Lotus Society/Buddhist Temple. Yoga: an introduction with emphasis on the beginning postures, breath, concentration, & relaxation. 8 consecutive Tuesday evenings, 7:30-9PM. \$50/\$40-members. Call 761-6520.

To submit calendar or classified items:

The deadline for October's issue is Sept. 25. Calendar listings are free up to 10 lines, and \$5 for each additional 10 lines. Classified listings are \$5 for 1 to 10 lines, and \$5 for each additional 10 lines. If you use less than 10 lines the fee is the same, no pro-ration. There are approximately 30 characters per line.

Mail items to 3 Keppler Court, Ann Arbor, 48103. If you have questions, call Linda at 662-4902 Mon. through Thurs.

Book Review: Peace Love and Healing

-Bill Taylor

Siegel, Bernie S. M.D. 1989. <u>Peace</u>, <u>Love</u>, <u>and Healing</u>. <u>Bodymind</u> <u>Communication and the Path to Self-Healing</u>: <u>An Exploration</u>. Harper & Row, \$18.95.

Peace, Love, and Healing is Dr. Siegel's second book, the sequel to his bestselling Love, Medicine, and Miracles. The author's thesis is relatively simple and straightforward: body and mind are part of the same system; they interact. How we feel, our emotions, our consciousness of being affects our physical state—affects our health. This being the case we can heal ourselves by changing our emotional states. We can cure ourselves of not merely the sniffles or a headache but of the diseases of this generation as well; AIDS and cancer, for example.

Siegel writes,"It is important that we realize that we can never cure everything. We will never find homes for all the homeless, or food for all the hungry, or cures for all diseases. But we can as doctors, as family and as friends, care for everyone. And in that caring, true healing will occur—the healing of the spirit and of lives."[p.227]

Siegel, an M.D., nominates neuropeptides and the endocrine system as two likely physiological pathways by which our emotional selves are expressed; but notes that the systematic detailed studies have

yet to be carried out. In the meantime he offers us anecdotal evidence as supportive of his thesis and argues that the research on placebo effect and the well-documented effect of stress on the immune system are evidence by analogy.

The self-healing tech-

niques which he suggests as useful are not unusual and are widely available. They range from psychotherapy to visualization, yoga, meditation, drawing, journaling, progressive relaxation and biofeedback; all of which enhance our contact with right brain functions. "By helping us achieve peace of mind they give us access to our bodies healing system. It takes more distress and poison to kill someone who has peace of mind and loves life." [p. 35]

A Wise Teacher once told me that illness is a way of learning a lesson one refuses to learn any other way. When we learn the meaning of the illness, what it is that it has to teach us, then it no longer serves any purpose in our lives and it ends. Literally. And then we go on to learn the rest of the things that our life is about. Siegel is a Wise Teacher too, and he makes the same point.

Our culture teaches us differently. It teaches that illness is something to have fixed, like a car that doesn't start or a toilet that won't flush. You can get by with that idea as long as what is "wrong" is not too complex and the mechanic knows what to do. But some diseases are like driving across New Mexico in a Masserati. Sometimes the mechanics at "Ace's Garage—We Specialize in all Makes" don't know what to do and then people learn to fix themselves or die. And

sometimes its a lot more convenient (less pain and suffering) to fix yourself rather than wait around for AAA.

Catastrophic illnesses like AIDS or Cancer do not indicate that just one part of us doesn't work right. Rather, such events indicate that the entire structure of our life has gone awry. A recovering alcoholic, for example, does not just stop drinking. Instead she begins a lifelong process of growth and change in order to remain sober. Thus it is with AIDS or Cancer or any other disease.

To limit our response to paying some "expert" we may have never met before to "make it go away" significantly lowers our chances of healing and recovery. Indeed, such an approach escalates small problems into big ones over time. Disease as a phenomenon is progressive. In my own experience the health enhancing process which works most effectively is a multifaceted approach with attention to the intellectual, the emotional, the physical, the sexual and the spiritual selves; a truly holistic approach.

Bernie's book (he says he'd rather be called Bernie than Dr. Siegel) is a good one, but sometimes its a little difficult to see the type through your tears, the stories are that inspiring. Reading this book for some will be an affirmation of

what they already know. For others it will be a discovery of what they already know. Either way its an inspiring document.

Bill Taylor is a Social Worker with a background in Mental Health. He is also a Polarity therapist and is "working" on a Ph.D.

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other. There's so much overlapping and if you try to analyze how the children are learning —they're learning from different activities, or they're learning many different things from one activity, one activity will flow in to something else—it's not segmented or in any "topics." Life is learning, they look like they are playing most of the day.

CTW: Some people have the idea that if you don't structure the day then the children would want to sit around and watch TV.

Cathy: Take away the structure and give them a chance to create—and don't have a television around. Our children have learned to be self-motivated. They certainly have times when they are bored, but invariably they will work through that boredom and come up with something really creative. And as far as I can see, self-motivation is the only appropriate motivation for true learning. I feel particularly negative

about television—that it dilutes and diverts creative opportunity for all of us. We have never had one.

Ken: I guess our critique of, American culture would be really severe. To say that beauty, art and creative expression are not valued in our society would be an understatement. We believe that it's a basic human need to be nourished "not by bread alone" but by these more subtle influ-

ences. As it is, many times we are just stimulated more than nourished; by rich foods, exaggerated manners, violence and just plain noise. We are over-fed yet undernourished in more than a material sense.

CTW: Many people have the sense that you are nourishing Ann Arbor with your plants and food. How did that evolve?

Cathy: It's always hard to look back and say how did this happen when you find yourself doing something. It started out we were going to grow for the restaurant [Indian Summer]. As we separated from the restaurant we needed to find other markets so we started going down to Ann Arbor to the Farmer's Market and saw people that way.

We started from nothing. We didn't have any experience. I'm from the city, Ken's sort of from the city. I'd never had a garden. We had no equipment—nothing to fall back on. It's been very difficult but we felt compelled to keep doing it. There is a real need for nourishing food and not too many people willing to grow organically. The feedback of good people has helped to nourish us—to give us the strength and commitment to keep going.

CTW: You're successfully living a lifestyle that a lot of people, idealize. What do you think has made this successful for you?

Cathy: It's a good question. One basic and sort of mundane response is that Ken has real strong work ethic background. He has really worked his way through a lot of problems. And he dragged me along with it (laughs). I guess I'm sort of down to earth too. We've worked through the hardships together. But we wouldn't or couldn't have without being sustained by our ideals and vision.

Ken: It's not finished, so it's hard to say. It's still moving and it fascinates me. I'm real romantic. I can sacrifice a lot because ideals and stuff I feel are life sustaining. Maybe that's part of it, the sacrifices don't hurt so much. It's just ongoing. If you ask me about the far away past I can judge that a little more but as far as closer to the present it's just kind of all happening. And that's the way I want it to be. It's sort of holistic that way. We're involved with it. It's part

of trying to rediscover the eros, the art and the beauty of culture as opposed to just having a logical rational existence.

Cathy: It's about embracingthe mystery. We are trying to live in a more spontaneous, intuitive manner—in that sense we have exchanged security in the material world for a really interesting time.

CTW: What is the scope of

the organic farming you're doing now?

Ken: About 5 acres at the most.

CTW: Is this a practical enterprise that can be done on a larger scale? Could the U.S. eventually be organic and get rid of agribusiness?

Ken: I don't think it's practical that way. I think there is a certain thing that you could call organic farming that could be practiced on a large scale but we're not interested in that. We want to just garden, really. And stay away from the machinery as much as possible. There is a whole science of organic farming but I don't want to get involved in that at all. I really have a lot of faith in natural processes and that we can intuit our way around this thing a bit more. Some people talk about all these enzymes and microbes that you have to have for organic farming and I can't deal with it really. There's some validity to it but the scientific viewpoint is pretty much self-affirming. We just go out there and keep our eyes open and it usually works out.

CTW: The way that you describe this it sounds like it all just happens. Some people who are reading

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are losing vitality so people are

losing their vitality. I've had just

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this are doing small scale organic gardening. Are there things that are helpful that you use?

Ken: So much of it is just being willing to do the work. The experience just has to come to each person. Everybody has access to the information, reading the books and things. There are biodynamic gardeners, there's all kinds, and then somebody's grandma—she'll be doing a good job too. We've had a lot of people out here, you put them on a row to thin and they'll just go crazy. It's very hard if you lack the concentration or the person is a little distracted or their mind is trying to escape this thing. Not everybody can do it right away. Do you garden at all?

CTW: Yes.

Ken: You know, you have to get settled down.

CTW: It's wonderfully therapuetic.

Ken: It is. It's a good indicator. If you can go out there and be happy in the garden for three or four hours you're in pretty good shape.

CTW: Why has it been worth the work?

Ken: It's not work. It's just having an ideal — having something that you really care about and that's what's kept us so strong as a family. We have something we really care about. We have a vital common interest in it. As that inter-

est is widening to include music, dance, whatever—we'll do it together and it won't be work. It might involve some work or sacrifice.

CTW: What makes it all worthwhile for you, Cathy?

Cathy: I feel we have a trust, a gift. We've been given this opportunity, and it's one thing we can do in a small way to help heal the planet, and the culture. In our own space and in our particular territory we do as much as we can. And I have faith that there are reverberations.

Ken: I feel stronger than ever that our soil and our environment are losing vitality so people are losing their vitality. Before we can deal with all the social and personal problems I think it's absolutely essential to rebuild people's health. I've had just an inkling of what a healthy soil is, and it's radically different. I think that a healthy person would be that much radically different from what we've grown accustomed to. We have grown accustomed to less than exuberant living. Less than fulfillment. We have just accepted it. People say all the time "that's life". I

can't accept that. It just seems that there should be a lot of joy and happiness.

CTW: What about broader community support?

Cathy: It's certainly true, we couldn't have done it without support. We may say we've left the city, but we wouldn't be here without the support from people who live in the city. Approval is not the same as real community. If we're entering a new phase hopefully it will be communing with people in a new way. We've been at the Farmer's Market for a long time because we've gotten a lot of approval and support there; we really have valued the person to person contact in the stall. We were looking for something more than people saying "this is great".

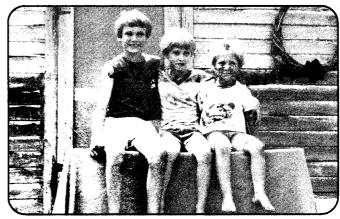
Ken: I've always had this idea, sort of a picture in my mind, of a lot of people working physically together,

> towards a common goal. Not only like working together and being simple, being like peasants, having simple needs not complicated by so many interpersonal things going on. Just people working together side by side and as they're working it becomes an art—they're They're singing, see. singing and it's a rhythm.

We're doing the farming part and kind of doing the music thing and maybe somehow

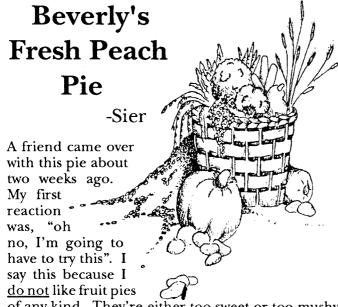
those will work more together and really living life more artistically and having our daily activities more appealing and beautiful and more nourishing than now.

Cathy: There is a real aesthetic or artistic goal here, you really can't see when you talk about us growing vegetables.



Billy, Kenny, & Edwin King

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of any kind. They're either too sweet or too mushy for my taste. So I tried my polite bite and to my surprise I asked for my own piece and for the recipe.

This pie is mostly gathering and assembling, so make two and give one to a friend.

Pie Shell - A 9 inch single crust

1 cup whole wheat pastry flour

1/6 cup margarine

1/6 cup butter

1/2 tsp. salt

1/4 cup water (amount varies depending on the weather)

Cut or rub margarine into flour, until it is about the texture of course sand. Then cut or rub butter into the mix, the texture should be the size of small peas.

Lightly mix in water to moisten the ingredients thoroughly.

On a floured board, roll mixture into a circle. Make 1/2 inch larger than the pie pan. Fold dough lightly ito fourths, with a spatula place dough in pan, and unfold. Fold the edges under by pinching around pie pan.

Pierce the bottom of pie crust with a fork several times, bake at 350 for 10 minutes. Watch for puffing and if it puffs, pierce again to bring it down.

Take out of oven when it starts to brown, and cool.

Peach Topping

2 cups peach or apricot juice

2 cups peeled, pitted, and chopped peaches

1/4 cup corn starch

1 tablespoon butter

2 tablespoon lemon juice

Over medium heat cook the peach or apricot juice, cornstarch, and peaches until it thickens and becomes clear. Remove from heat. Add lemon juice and butter. Let cool.

Slice 2 cups peaches, and whip one cup whipping cream with 2 tablespoons maple syrup.

Prepare 1/2 cup crushed Graham Crackers (Mydol or New Morning Amaranth)

Putting it all together

Layer in cool pie shell the crushed grahm crackers, sliced peaches, and the cooled filling. Spread whipped cream over top.

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Ann Arbor, MI 48103