

A muddy, rutted piece of land stood vacant in the center of our community for over a year. For over a year, we listened while University committees, community groups, and others proposed the building of a park. We heard the University protest that it had no funds, that studies would have to be made, committees formed. Finally, we took the land. We tended it, loved it, planted trees, grass, and flowers on it, made it into People's Park.

We used the land. We hadn't tested and analyzed the soil. We planted things and they grew. We hadn't run a feasibility study. We had enough labor, freely given, to build the Park. We had no budgets. We found the money and materials we needed in our community. We had no organization, no leader, no committee. The Park was built by anyone and everyone and we, all of us together, worked it out.

We were told we hadn't filled out the right forms, hadn't followed the correct procedures, hadn't been responsible, hadn't been patient. We had asked the wrong questions, and built a beautiful park.

It was an incredibly good feeling, building that Park. In this country of cement and steel cities, better suited for its machines than for its people, we made a place for people. At a time when only experts and committees, qualified and certified, are permitted to do things, we did something ourselves, and did it well. For all of us, hip and straight, the Park was something tangible that we had done, something that drew our community together. The Park was common ground. People's Park existed for a little more than a month. On "Bloody Thursday," the day the fence went up around People's Park, we took to the streets. The fence stayed up, although the Chancellor supported a park, the University professors supported the Park, the student body voted for the Park, the City Council asked for the Park, and 30,000 people marched through the streets.

People's Park now stands empty and guarded. The Park died, the idea that created it lives.

Let a thousand parks bloom!