**FAR OUT: life on & after the commune**

The film began over fifty years ago after Robert Redford optioned Ray Mungo’s book **Famous Long Ago: My Life and Hard Times with Liberation News Service** which had made a splash when it was published in the early ‘70s. Visions of sugar plums danced in our heads after the signing and champagne brunch, as we all envisioned the money and fame that would come from an actual movie about our young lives.

Redford hired Ray to write the screenplay. Big mistake, as Ray’s script had nothing to do with the original story The option lapsed, and even though Mungo has been paid good money over the years by selling the rights, no movie has ever been actually produced.

Later that year, we met with Ray and others on an island in the middle of the Mississippi in Minneapolis and came up with what we thought was a very promising treatment for a narrative film. Unfortunately, it did not go anywhere and during the subsequent decades we made films about the nuclear power issue, Agent Orange and the Vietnam veterans, environment, peace and drug issues as well as other eclectic topics and did our fair share of work freelancing.

Over that time, we made stabs at tackling our communal origin story–shot film and produced demo reels that never seemed to congeal into a full scale production. We put it off as a project best tackled from the perspective of our middle age. But that came and went.

In 2023, I resolved to start again. Gathering and digitizing all of the material that had been shot over a fifty year period in many different formats–35mm, 16mm, 8mm, super 8mm, Hi8 video, beta sp video, DVCam and digital and the recent interviews from 2006-2010–I dove into editing this long delayed opus.

A year later, it is done. **Far Out** traces the evolution of our little communal family from its urban origins in a left wing faction fight at Liberation News Service (LNS) through years of subsistence, back-to-the-land farming, to the re-awakening of our political and social activism through such things as community theatre and anti-nuclear organizing. Our story includes a dramatic act of home town civil disobedience, the building of a national movement, five nights of sold out anti-nuclear concerts at Madison Square Garden with the likes of Jackson Browne, Bruce Springsteen, Bonnie Raitt, Crosby, Stills and Nash and many others as well as a 250,000 person rally.

**Far Out** paints an intimate portrait of how this group of artists and activists dealt with the pressing issues of the day–gay and women’s rights, sexual freedom, nuclear power, raising children, the role of the family–to the realities of life, relationships and money in an anarchic communal setting.

It’s been a long, strange trip as the Grateful Dead put it and I’m glad that I was able to come along for the ride. And to document it.

 Charles Light