

Living behind the Redwood Curtain has pluses and minuses. The minuses are things like too few jobs, cloudy weather and geographic isolation. But isolation has an up side. One of the pluses of the Redwood Curtain is that we are *forced* to be a community. I mean, we are so remote and sparsely populated, we ~~happen to~~ bump into each other more than we wish?...

Humboldt is a lot like the old Midwestern towns where people learned to get along and forge community, by social necessity. Cursillo provides one example of ~~our closely knit community~~ ^{how people} ~~of our community.~~ ^{co-exist}

Cursillo is a Spanish word that means "short course." Perhaps those who came up with the word figured a short course is less intimidating than a long course.

Cursillos de Cristiandad, began as a renewal movement of the Roman Catholic Church, founded in Majorca, Spain by a group of laymen in 1944. It was originally aimed at getting men back to church, since the majority of church-attenders were, ~~and still are,~~ mostly women. Later, Cursillo for women developed. In sum, Cursillo is a 3 day course that encourages Christians to practice what they preach. In case that scares some of you who may stand outside the church, that means we are learning to love God and neighbor.

Cursillo is the original three day Christian renewal movement, and has since been licensed for use by several mainline Christian denominations, some of which have retained the trademarked "Cursillo" name, while others have modified it and given it different names, like: Alpha, Encounter, Antioch, Search (high school students), Awakening (college students), ... Chrysalis (Methodist Youth), and Walk to Emmaus (Methodist Adult).

The weekend includes talks, some given by priests or pastors and ~~some~~ ^{work} by lay people. The major emphasis of the weekend is to ask participants to take what they have learned back to the world and their respective churches.

Until 1961, all U.S. Cursillos were held in Spanish. That year the first English-speaking weekend was held in San Angelo, Texas. Today, Cursillo is a worldwide movement with centers in nearly all North, South and Central American countries, Europe and parts of Asia.

The Cursillo Community in Humboldt County has some features that reflect the open-mindedness of our local culture. First: the Humboldt Redwoods Cursillo is uniquely ecumenical. Most Cursillos split up Catholics and Protestants; in Humboldt County Catholics and Protestants go through the course together. Many Cursillos separate the men and women; again in Humboldt County the men and women are together, though they sleep in separate dorms. The unity expressed through the Cursillo movement demonstrates that one of the joys of living in Humboldt is that Christians of all stripes cooperate more than they do elsewhere. It is my hope that this Humboldt spirit of cooperation will not only strengthen the Christian community, but influence ~~into~~ our entire north coast to reach out and get to know, and care about, ~~your~~ neighbors.

This has been Dan Price for Community Comment