Bike Carts, Sailboats, Convergence, and the Naked (Bike Ride) Truth

Contributed by Jan Lundberg
14 June 2009

We're glad to report that over 60% of the food for the 10-day Village Building Convergence in Portland, Oregon was bike-carted at least in part. The food was mostly from farmers markets where the farmers donated to the Convergence's dinners. We also got the cooperation of Clever Cycles, a local business, plus creative volunteers. It all fit into an inspiring annual event.

The essence of the Village Building Convergence (VBC) can be glimpsed in the project-sharing. After our bike-cart/sailboat delivery of produce on Friday, when everyone had sat down to a splendid vegan dinner (on real plates and steel utensils), three urban ecovillage/co-housing projects in Portland shared their progress. The amount of energy saving, depaving, recycling, composting, gardening, natural building, tool-sharing, car-sharing, consensus decision-making, renewable energy, common meals, etc., were impressive and thus cheered.

Now that the new Oregon law allowing grey water and other re-coded sustainable practices has been passed, more changes of a positive nature will follow -- and widely.

Robert Gilman was the main attraction of the evening. He is the former publisher of In Context magazine. Famous for his oft-quoted definition of the term "ecovillage," he is now a city councilman in Langley, Washington. His presentation made the strong analogy that the dominant culture of empire is giving way to a planetary consciousness, just as pioneer species give way to succession species: the pioneer species are about short term expansion, and the succession species (or culture) is about diversity and longevity.

For Saturday, the last night of the VBC, the highlight was a presentation by Diana Leafe Christian on ecovillages around the world. Her slides and descriptions made one want to visit each ecovillage and emulate them everywhere. Diana is author of Finding Community and Creating a Life Together, and long-time editor of Communities magazine.

Diana was followed by a salsa dance band that wisely instructed the crowd first how to dance the dance. Before Diana had the floor I was the dinner background music, as I played 16 of my eco-tunes. I was glad I had family and friends present, especially for Diana's great show and the fine vegan meal. Some of the food had been biked from the sailboat we had taken upriver from farms the previous day.

This evening there was excitement in the air about Portland, as the midnight Naked Bike Ride, a growing annual event, converged in the northwest corner of town. Over three thousand riders were expected, in part because Critical Mass rides had died out. As I watched riders converging, with my bike on the last bus out of town -- boo hoo, I couldn't participate -- my bus driver said he expected over 10,000 riders. "The purpose is to demand for better biking conditions in the city. But this mostly serves as the excuse for the naked ride." As I saw some of the well built riders flocking to the starting point, already half naked, I was tantalized and conflicted. For one thing, my guitar strapped on my back meant I could not be truly naked, and the darn thing obscures my flashing red light on the back of my helmet. So on into the

night I motored, glad to get out to the countryside and see my friend the heron 'a hunting.

"The world naked bike ride is a protest against our dependence on oil as a source of energy and the second class status of bikes on our streets. Being naked is a way to show how vulnerable bicyclists are." - bigwavedaveo, photographer (see upper left photo)

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See VBC story we ran earlier (with links):

Pedaling Produce for Village Building Convergence, Portland

Recode Oregon

Thanks to Capt. Jeff Garritsen for photos (below and above) of bike-cart/sailboat transport!

Diana Leafe Christian's website:

dianaleafechristian.org