

-MAY-

MONTHLY REPORT

“WE DO NOT ENHERIT OUR LANDS FROM
OUR ANCESTORS, WE BORROW IT FROM
OUR CHILDREN.”

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SUMMARY

The visit to Canada was very beneficial in understanding the differences in European and North American attitude towards waste and recycling. The biggest difference that I have noticed is how much easier it is for North Americans to throw away something instead of reusing it. Our culture is known to be highly consumable and wasteful and we are this way because of the systems we have established. Take something like having an inexpensive gas system as an example. The more inexpensive the gas is, easier it is for a typical American to live at a place they like best and travel on a day to day basis to their place of employment. The benefit of living far away from employment outweighs the cost of inexpensive gas and time of travel. In fact, our system is so “well established” that the majority of the people can afford their own cars and pay for their own travel. Carpooling seems to be inconvenient in terms of time and effort. Other systems such as our landfills have inexpensive tipping fees and is typically located in low developed and traffic areas which “hide” waste. Though this system may seem like a good idea, it creates an “out of sight, out of mind” mentality and not much consideration is then given when an object is wasted instead of potentially being reused or recycled.



One way in reducing our wasteful culture is to inform the common people about the impacts of their actions and how to improve them. Vancouver is a city of great resources and they are not afraid to share them. From magazines and newspapers to websites, radio stations and public conferences,

Vancouver is providing sustainable information to those who want to learn about a living healthier. Once the information is provided, the next step is to take action. Vancouver has implemented sustainability simply by layout and integration of the city and buildings, fresh food markets, and a good balance of parks, waterfront and mountains. Technologies such as Canada’s largest green roof, hydroelectric power plants, public transportation along with strict building code regulations make Vancouver a leader in sustainability and I feel that North American cities ought to use this city as a guide in reducing their own environmental impact.



INTERVIEWS/CONFERENCES/PROJECT VISITS

One of my first stops in Vancouver was at the Lighthouse Sustainable Building Center. Here the people were very resourceful offering me bits and pieces of innovative construction projects and products used throughout British Columbia. Some resources that were given to me were the Demolition, Land Clearing and Construction Toolkit as well as a booklet with some valuable case studies information. This toolkit has been developed in order to reduce the amount of materials that are being wasted when they could be used for other purposes. The toolkit describes Canada's basic overview of their construction waste management as well as identifying recycling, salvage and deconstruction services available in the region.

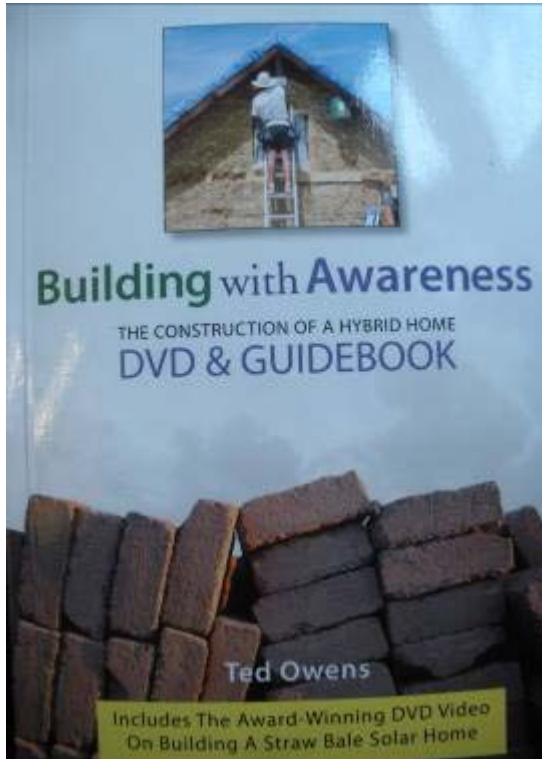


Green Space BC is a annually published magazine which focuses on sustainable resources for British Columbia. It is a free magazine and can be found in many public places throughout Vancouver. The magazine focuses exclusively on sustainability business opportunities, initiatives and challenges. A directory is included at the back of the magazine which lists companies by specialty who are providing sustainable services and products.

One website that I would like to make note of is from the Recycling Council of British Columbia (www.rcbc.bc.ca). This non profit organization promotes the principle of zero waste information services through the exchange of ideas and research. Such services as a recycling hotline, material exchanges (for business and residential applicatoins), public outreach, recycling education programs, hosted annual events and awards to educate the common public of ways to promote a zero waste community.

One of the few missed opportunities from the fellowship comes from the annual Living Future seminar which was sold out in Portland on May 6th through May 8th. This seminar gathers many of the deepest green building professionals and the sessions are designed to to be interactive fostering lively discussions and collaborative solutions to creating truly sustainable communities. Though

designing for deconstruction is not a big ticket item discussed, such details as material selection and analysis programs, material reuse and elimination of hazardous materials have all been covered. Some of the sessions can be downloaded at <http://www.cascadiagbc.org/living-future/09/program>. I find this seminar to be very motivational for a person such as myself to find ways in making the change that we want to see in this world. Next year's seminar is May 5-7 in Seattle Washington and I plan on going at the moment.



During one of my visits to the Vancouver Public Library, I was intrigued to watch a DVD documentary called "Building with Awareness" created by Ted Owens. The documentary shows you step-by-step how to build a straw bale house. At the end of the project, the home is capable of generating all of its own electricity as well as incorporating passive solar heating and cooling. The DVD also comes with a book that illustrates, construction cost, plans, pictures, specifications, handy tips, and a construction schedule. Most of the materials used on the site are natural materials and much emphasis is placed on the aesthetics, sustainable concepts, and space utilization making the information easy for anyone to understand.

The Canadian Green Building Council (CaGBC) has adopted a durable building credit (MR 8) with the intent to minimize the materials use and construction waste over a building's life. The focus of this credit is to prevent premature failure of the building and its components and assemblies because of the climatic changes in Canada. The point is awarded based on the drying, the drainage and the durability of the overall building envelope design and its connection components. Though, durability is not covered in the national building code, the CSA S478-95 report is used as the guideline behind durable building credit. I was not able to purchase the CSA S478-95 report however I was able to find another report on durable building envelopes and plan on posting it on the website. Most durable buildings will last anywhere from 50 to 100 years if maintained properly. Careful building material selection and life cycle cost comparisons ought to be factored in order to create the most economical and durable building available.

WEBSITE



I have now completed finding case studies to support the fellowship. I do not have a final count yet but I am happy with the amount of information I have gathered. The case studies are to be organized as mentioned in previous monthly reports.

After reviewing the publications in which I have obtained throughout the fellowship, I realize that I have enough information to create an additional tab. This tab will be reserved for a number of publications in pdf form that will be available for others to read. As an example, the DLC Waste Management Toolkit mentioned above will be available on the website. Providing the publications tab will make the website even more of an effective hub of communication for fellow visitors.

The expected completion of website will occur before Final Report of the fellowship. I am in the process of finding a time to work with a friend of mine to get all of the new information up on the website. Once the website is completed, I then will send a mass email to all of those who have helped me throughout the fellowship. Hopefully by word of mouth and through my presentations, this website can be an effective tool to improve designing buildings with deconstruction in mind.

PERSONAL LIFE

Transitioning from Europe back to North America couldn't have been any easier. I flew out of Dublin transferred in New York and landed in Seattle where my Uncle Chuck was waiting for me with arms wide open. When I first saw him, I was shocked because I am used to looking into a crowd and not being able to recognize anyone. Uncle Chuck let me stay at his place for a few days where we mainly told stories, cooked a number of different meals and he even let me borrow his car to travel up into Canada. I was quite nervous driving at first because it has been over 8 months since I last pushed on a gas pedal. Like learning a bike though, I was heading northbound for the last research portion of the fellowship.

While up in Canada, I took a weekend off to go camping up in the Squamish area which is an enjoyable 45 minute drive north of Vancouver. It wasn't quite tourist season yet so I was able to which ever campsite I wanted which was really nice. After I set up my tent, I met some locals that were directed me to some of the "classic" hiking trails within the area. I hiking up the side of a mountain was a lot of huffing and puffing and yet every breath was worth it because at the top was

an unbelievable view of a valley which I just came from. I could see for miles and miles and felt as though I could jump into the sky and start flying like the birds. Those are the moments when I realize how lucky of a person I am. If it wasn't for the fellowship, I wouldn't have been able to experience it ☺ I hope I that continue to explore and discover new places of the world.



On finishing up my fellowship, I had decided to take the Amtrak back to Milwaukee where I then would carpool up to my hometown. I felt that I ought to try and reduce my environmental impact as much as I can and so taking the train is one of the best ways for keeping my CO2 levels to a minimum. The ride was 48 hours long but was quite picturesque going through the Rockies and along the Mississippi River. The thing about traveling America by train is that I was able to meet a wide variety of Americans that like to travel. All of them with different backgrounds yet when I shared with them my stories of the traveling fellowship, their reaction were excitement which continues to motivate me. I look forward to moving into the final phase of the fellowship and bringing everything together.

Once again “thank you” for this wonderful opportunity and if there is anything that ought to be addressed more directly, please feel free to email me at stephand@msoe.edu.