

BETWEEN A SMOKESTACK AND A CLEARCUT SEARCHING FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN A NORTHERN MANITOBA TOWN

by Carie McIntosh

In 1979, my mother and I moved to Flin Flon, MB where she had accepted a teaching position at a local elementary school. We drove for hours on a thin thread of road with trees towering on each side. I remember asking 'where is this road going?' and 'when will it end?' As a 6 year old, I watched in anticipation for the smokestack with its three sets of lights blinking to signal the completion of a long journey. When the stack becomes visible among the trees the end of the road is only 15 minutes away. The stack remains a beacon to me today--not only that I am almost home but of the challenges my community faces--air pollution, over-forestry, and sustainability. Almost twenty years later, I am back in Flin Flon working and living near my family and, as an adult, I realize the magnitude of that stack both in size and consequence.

Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company, Ltd. (HBM&S) operates a mining and smelting plant that was built 70 years ago and operates today with the same 1930 technology. The majority of our air pollution comes from this plant in the form of sulphur dioxide from the smokestack. A few years ago, I stood at the bottom of the stack and looked up. It was like a giant Redwood--so tall that it seemed to go on forever. The stack's height is a blessing say some of the long time citizens of Flin Flon because in the past the stacks were shorter. Smoke from the mine would continually blanket the town making it difficult to breathe and killing gardens overnight. Now with the height of the stack, the majority of pollution travels to outlying areas falling into forests and landing in lakes.

Every spring, experts from Manitoba Environment, Manitoba Health, and HBM&S meet with community leaders to discuss air quality in the Flin Flon region. This year, the presentation focuses on the positive changes made over the past few years. For exam-

ple, emissions of sulphur dioxide are down and within regulated limits. Heavy metals emissions (arsenic, lead, cadmium, copper, zinc) have fluctuated but are usually below the standards used in other provinces. The maximum available limit for sulphur dioxide has occasionally been exceeded, mostly in the uptown area and caused most frequently by spill gases. Spill gases consist of the

stuff that doesn't make it up the stack due to low drafts or damper problems in the bag house. Improvements to the bag house have decreased particulate emissions by half from 6.7 to 3.7 tonnes per day.

Other experts, community leaders and citizens in the region, have a different view on the facts and figures presented this year. Approximately 180,000 tonnes of SO₂ go into our air every year from one smokestack and its spill gases. There were 321 air quality warnings issued in 1997--almost one for every day. Fourteen times between January 3, 1995 and April 5, 1998 there was too much ar-

senic in our air. We have 30% more respiratory disease hospitalizations than other comparable populations (Jolly and Blanchard, 1993). The monitors for heavy metals (e.g. arsenic, lead) in the air are tested once every three days. So for 2/3 of the year there is no data available. Two kilotonnes of these heavy metals are emitted from the stack each year. The rocks closest to the plant operations are just now starting to recover their vegetation from the days when the stacks were shorter.

Tolko's pulp and paper mill

Our area's vegetation faces an additional challenge because it falls within the Forest Management Licence #2 for Tolko's pulp and paper mill. The FML #2 extends from Swan River to Leaf Rapids in the north and from Thompson west to the MB-SK border. Their annual allowable cut includes 1,800,000 cubic metres of softwood trees and 890,000 cubic metres of hardwood trees. On the Saskatchewan side of the border our forests fall within the FML for SaskFor McMillan which holds a license for an area of comparable size.

On a trip back to Flin Flon from Prince Albert, I finally explored down one of the new logging roads. Like a flooded stream with many new tributaries, the road winds its way north to Flin Flon

See *Trees Flattened* page 9 ►



*Clearcut off Harding Road on the Hanson Lake Highway
between Prince Albert, SK, and Flin Flon, MB.*

Photo: April, 1998 by Carie McIntosh

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NUCLEAR WASTE NEWS

Dave Taylor of Concerned Citizens of Manitoba reports that the Town Council of Pinawa has passed a resolution calling on the Federal Minister of Natural Resources Canada to utilize the expertise resident in this nuclear industry community to develop a "demonstration vault" for the disposal of high level nuclear waste. While the resolution doesn't say where the demonstration vault should be located, there just happens to be a multi-million dollar hole in the ground conveniently located nearby in the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet. This hole, the Underground Research Lab (URL), was developed by AECL (Atomic Energy of Canada Limited) as a research site for its proposal for deep rock burial of radioactive waste from nuclear reactors.

Over the years, the URL has been the subject of much controversy, with many people concerned that it would eventually be used for a nuclear waste disposal site. Manitoba's High Level Radioactive Waste Act forbids the permanent underground disposal of nuclear waste in this province, but is equivocal about "research". Would a "demonstration vault" be considered research? AECL's early documents when setting up shop in the Lac du Bonnet area called for a test facility, followed by a demonstration vault, followed by a full-scale operating repository. Much has transpired since then, but sometimes the more things change, the more they stay the same...

Pinawa Council's request comes in the wake of what seems to be a failed effort to turn the Whiteshell Nuclear Research Establishment, the town's economic main-

stay, over to a private consortium. The federal government, busy with economic downsizing, is consolidating most of its nuclear research capacity at the Chalk River Labs near Ottawa. The feds appear ready to abandon Pinawa and its highly trained residents, without ensuring appropriate transition measures for economic diversification, but it's unlikely that Lac du Bonnet residents, or other Manitobans, will support diversification through a demonstration nuclear waste vault. As Dave Taylor points out, the Whiteshell site itself is highly contaminated and as such, should remain the responsibility of the company that created the contamination - AECL.

Meanwhile, on other fronts, Nuclear Awareness Project in Ontario reports that AECL is working hard on its bid to sell reactors to Turkey, fully supported by our federal government. This in spite of the fact that on May 17, following the news of nuclear weapons test explosions in India, a prominent Turkish general declared publicly that Turkey should pursue its own nuclear weapons program. The recent (and historic) Indian tests were made possible by Canada's provision of nuclear technology to that country some thirty years ago. The Turkish "sale" will involve a Canadian taxpayer loan of \$1.5 billion. NAP is encouraging Canadians to write to Prime Minister Jean Chretien, protesting Canada's ongoing nuclear relationship with India and Pakistan, and protesting the planned Turkish reactor "sale". Remember, mail to the House of Commons is postage-free.

ECO

SPECIAL THANKS TO...

... member Kim Tyson, for her very generous donation of a television and VCR for use in our Resource Centre.

Remember, we have a good selection of environmental videos available for viewing and loan. Come down and check them out!

1997-1998

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ARE TEENAGED GIRLS POISED TO SAVE THE WORLD?

By Jan Westlund

They could be, according to Howard Lyman, Director of the US Humane Society's EATING WITH A CONSCIENCE campaign. Lyman was in town recently as a guest of the Winnipeg Vegetarian Association. He spoke to a packed house at Eckhardt-Gramatte Hall.

Young girls all over North America are fast becoming vegetarians. Once they hear about the institutionalized cruelty to animals and environmental degradation resulting from factory farms or the health problems caused by a high meat protein diet, they turn their noses up at animal flesh and flock around the salad bowl. Literally overnight. They have no families to feed, no meals to plan, no economic choices to make. They simply refuse to eat meat. And then they tell their friends about it.

And why does this fill Howard with hope for the future? Because he believes, as do many others, that we have a small window of opportunity to avert a catastrophe created by the population explosion which is projected for the next 30 to 40 years. Statistically, the

likelihood of our being able to serve meat to 10 billion people is negligible given that an acre of prime land can produce 40,000 lbs. of potatoes, 30,000 lbs. of carrots, 50,000 lbs of tomatoes or 250 lbs. of beef (Soil & Water v38, U of Cal Cooperative Extension). If, instead, we can somehow manage to whet the world's appetite for a plant based diet while slowing population growth, we may have a minuscule chance ... a broccoli floret of a chance ... to defuse that population time bomb.

The mothers of tomorrow are quick to grasp the need for change.

In fact, your average Canadian appears to know something's afoot about food as well. Canada's Food Guide has been revamped to downplay protein and raise the importance of grains and greens. As Lyman succinctly puts it, when WAS the last time someone told you they were eating MORE red meat?

How do we reconcile this groundswell towards diets de-emphasizing meat with the fact that

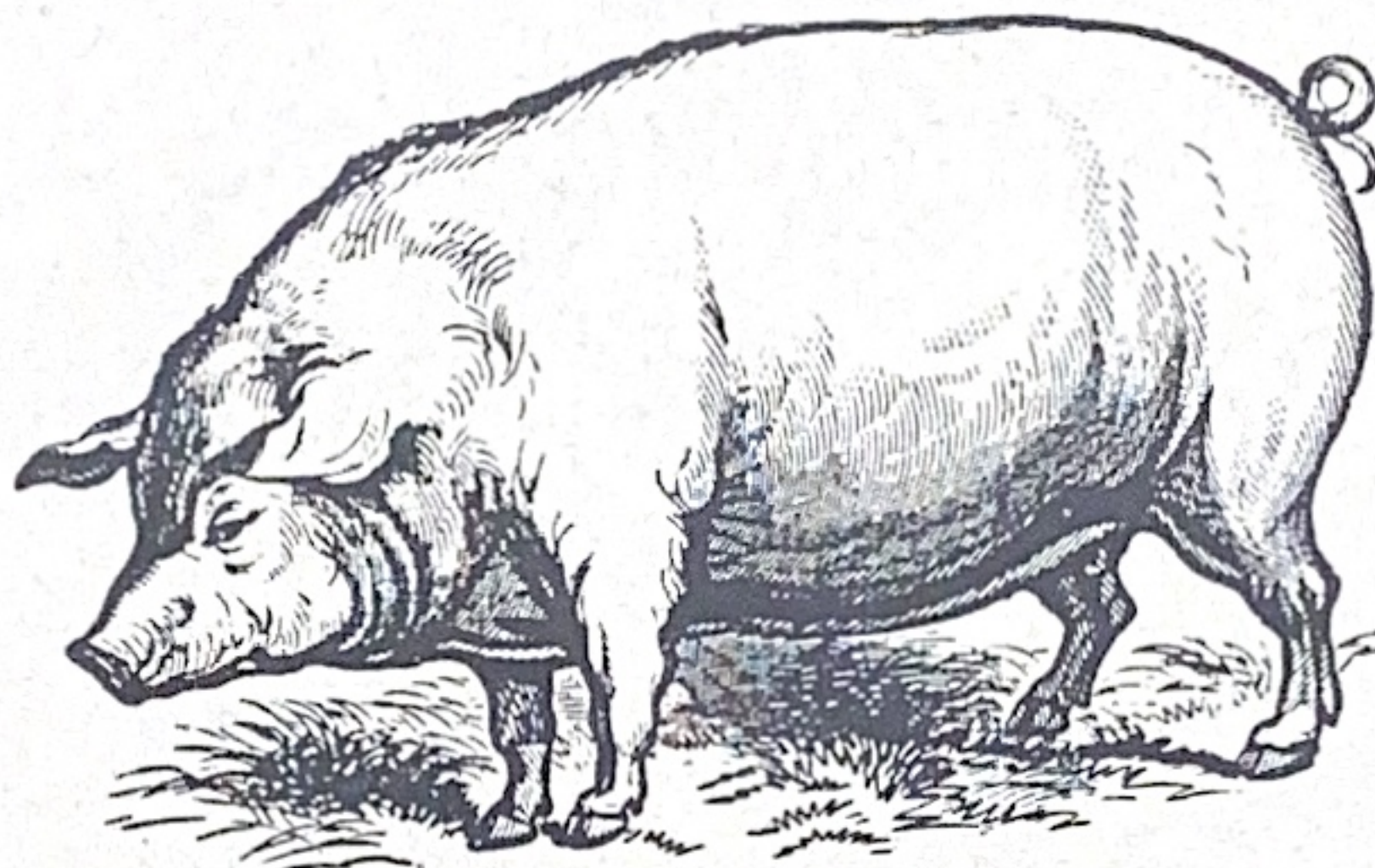
Manitoba seems hell-bent on becoming Miss Piggy at the Canada Day pageant? Our desire to become the pork producing centre of the country can only be explained, in a word, by ignorance.

According to Lyman, many states in the US will simply no longer permit massive hog operations to gain a hoof-hold. Here in Canada, only a few provinces remain dollar-desperate enough while lacking well-organized, well-funded opposition to such decimating developments. In a province like Manitoba which feels they have limited options, it appears difficult to turn one's back on a short term cash-cow. Especially if the long-term environmental concerns of those living downstream (water and odour contamination) are denied or devalued. And as long as the inhumane treatment of animals is largely ignored by everyone but 'zealots' whose views are all too easily marginalized then dismissed.

A number of powerful pork advocates, apparently with friends at the Province, steadfastly believe humongous hog operations will be our salvation even in the face of cogent arguments to the contrary. They fantasize about putting pork on tables all across Asia, creating jobs in our communities and wallowing in dollars; all the while refusing to believe the downside could be serious enough to stand in the way of progress. Their progress.

Lyman himself used to believe in factory farming with high volume sales, priding himself on the creed that 'bigger IS better'. Eschewing the life experience of three generations of organic farmers, he earned an agriculture degree and took over the family farm to maximize profits by increasing chemical inputs while acquiring more land, more equipment and more control over nature. He was riding high on cattle when cancer took his brother's life and left Lyman with a tumour on his spine. Hospitalized and facing life in a wheelchair, he started to rethink his farming practice with its over-reliance on the chemicals he fears may have sowed the seeds of cancer in his family.

See *Vegan Power* page 9 ►



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PESTICIDES? NO THANKS

by Anne Lindsey

Thankfully, warm weather is back with us again, but with it we can expect the usual barrage of pesticide applications. Dandelions, canker worms, mosquitoes, and a host of agricultural "pests" are the target organisms, but often as not, citizens are the unwitting recipients of a slew of synthetic chemicals and biological pest control products. Children are particularly at risk for health impacts. The national Campaign for Pesticide Reduction! has produced an informative booklet: *Pesticides and Your Child, An Overview of Exposures and Risks*, which provides good information on the many routes of exposure. These include at home, through indoor pest control programs and lawn and garden care; at school and day care; in outdoor air and drinking water; and through pesticide residues in food.

The local CPR! chapter has sent copies of the booklet to all the school divisions in the City of Winnipeg, requesting that they consider implementing a "pesticide free" policy, particularly in their grounds maintenance programs. Kudos go to the Transcona Springfield Division which responded that mowing and cutting are used to control weeds on their school properties rather than the application of chemicals. Not all the divisions have responded as yet, and a few well-placed calls from concerned parents and residents would help to reinforce CPR!'s message.

2,4-D and Cancer

CPR! is also concerned about the growing use of pesticides and herbicides by homeowners. According to Statistics Canada, some 67% of Canadians with gardens utilize pesticides.

One of the favourite products for use in Winnipeg is 2,4-D. It is present in most of the formulations utilized by commercial lawn care companies, and in off-the-shelf products purchased by homeowners. 2,4-D is used as a weed killer. It is a chlorophenoxy acid and

has been associated with an increased risk of the cancer called Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma in agricultural workers who are exposed to it, and in dogs living in households whose lawns were treated with 2,4-D.

Another commonly used product is chlorpyrifos (or Dursban).

It is an organophosphate pesticide developed as nerve gas, in the same family as malathion, dichlorvos and diazinon. These chemicals function to inhibit the activity of cholinesterase, an enzyme that allows the nervous system to function properly. They have been associated with asthma, an affliction which seems particularly prevalent in Winnipeg, and is on the rise nationally. Dursban is widely used by the City of Winnipeg in the control of Dutch elm disease and in other insect control programs. In fact, last year the City sprayed 67,000 pounds of chlorpyrifos on our parks, boulevards, and other civic spaces.



Pesticides for breakfast

Children are routinely exposed to pesticide residues in foods, particularly in the fruits and juices which are so popular in the early years. Data from the US indicate that the pesticides detected in 12 fruits and vegetables include 12 different carcinogens, 17 neurotoxins and 11 substances that can disrupt normal hormone function. In addition, more than 80% of peach, apple and celery samples contained residues of one or more pesticides. This data is relevant to Canada in that much of our food is imported from the US, and in that conventional farmers here use many of the same chemicals.

Rural Manitobans report that spray season has begun, along with the accompanying drift problems.

What can you do? 1. Eat organic foods - a whole array of wonderful locally produced organic veggies and fruits will soon be available, in the meantime, check out the offerings at Harvest Collective. 2. Send in your Anti-Pesticide Registration Form. Encourage your neighbours to do the same. 3. Don't use synthetic pesticides around your home (call our Resource Centre for suggested alternatives). 4. Pressure your elected representatives to develop sound pesticide-free public policy.

Pesticides and Your Child: An Overview of Exposures and Risks, is available at our Resource Centre.

ECO

INSECT CONTROL BRANCH

3 Grey Street

Winnipeg, MB R2L 1V2 Fax: 986-4868

Please register my residence against all City of Winnipeg pesticide applications, including all pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Signature: _____

WEED CONTROL BRANCH

2799 Roblin Boulevard

Winnipeg, MB R3R 0B8 Fax: 986-6587

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Signature: _____

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SAVE THE BELL RIVER CANYON

by Lindy Clubb

There is a valley north of Swan River in the Porcupine Mountains that is comparable to any in Western Canada. The Bell River Canyon is a vast, hidden place. You feel like an explorer when you find it. There is a breathtaking vista from the top of the valley's steep sides to the Bell river, which is a slender ribbon of silver curling far below through a mosaic of mature spruce and aspen trees. Surely this is one of nature's cathedrals, and it was a huge discovery for me.

We don't tend to think of our province as a place to celebrate views unless it has something to do with the sweep of the prairies. I've hiked there with others who have been moved to tears when coming upon this unexpected dramatic landscape. Dan Soprovich, the wildlife biologist, first led me there by snowmobile over three miles of an old logging road. It was winter but a mild, sunny day. We sat on the ledge of a steep sandy incline with our backs to some huge old white spruce trees, listening to the wind, watching a pine siskin skim over the air currents. I couldn't believe the panoramic view.

First rights for cutting

I don't want to give up this view, but the entire Bell River Canyon area is allocated for fibre to two companies: Louisiana Pacific and Tolko Mb. Inc. They share first rights for cutting - spruce for the Pas pulp mill, aspen for the strand board mill at Minitonas. Then the smaller independent logging operations compete through bids at auctions for their quotas for small sawmills. What remains is salvaged by local people for cordwood. And the wildlife is an afterthought. The blend of poplar and spruce that surrounds the valley is a red flag waving in the face of industrial forestry.

We need an extensive buffer of forest all around the edges of the canyon as well as the canyon itself to be protected from logging. A park reserve status placed on the valley would ensure this. Parks considers the canyon a medium level candidate for future status as a park reserve, it has an important enduring geographical feature. The canyon could have Interim Protection as a Park Reserve within 6 months, if enough concern was shown by the public.

We need the help of other people, and I need them to raise their voices as clearly as the call of a songbird protecting their territory. After all, this is our territory, our vista, and our resource, no matter where we live in the province.

The residents of Swan Valley and Birch River want this canyon protected, so the community support is there. The Department of Natural Resources (provincial) Parks branch have assessed an enduring feature within the valley and the biologists want it spared. It has the potential for important tourism and research activity. It

has a high concentration of neotropical migrant birds. It has clear cascading streams and the Bell river to provide a sanctuary for all kinds of animals. This canyon is valuable ground for terrestrial, botanical, avian, zoological and riparian (stream bank) zone research activities. It would contribute to the Protected Areas Initiative, and very little land in the Porcupine Mountain area is protected right now.

No ecological reserves in this area

According to Parks & Natural Areas people, "To date there are no ecological reserves in this area, but two sites are under consideration. Mr. Harley Davy of Birch River, has been personally studying the flora & fauna of the region for many years to document their ecological significance. The results have been made available to Tolko (formerly Repap) since the sites fall within its Forest Management Licence Area. Mineral disposition has now lapsed, other local uses and users, including hunting, trapping, and traditional use by Aboriginal peoples needs to be determined".

The gradient and sandy soils make the valleys unsuitable for present logging equipment but that could change at any time with emerging technologies. The companies have given verbal assurances and nothing more to spare the canyon. A park reserve status placed on the Bell River Canyon would ensure its survival. Along with extensive buffers of forest all around the edges of the canyon to protect it and its enduring features from logging, it would be saved for our own and future generations.

I have been back to the canyon twice, and I came home without side effects from drinking the water and with a young moose skull as a souvenir. The addition of fall colours to an already spectacular landscape brought me back to hike in with Michael Timmons and his friend Heyfa. It was Heyfa whose eyes filled up with tears when we first showed her the canyon. Dan wasn't there to point out every plant along the way but we did see mountain goldenrod and asters, rose bushes, hawthorns, alders, and we met three people on horseback riding up the old canyon road. What a great way to spend the day.

Please take a minute to write or call the Parks Department and lend your voice to the campaign to save this canyon. We will be taking tours of the area regularly through the Eco-Network and the Manitoba Naturalists Society. Sign up to see it yourself. Bring friends. Bring family. Bring a picnic lunch and fill up your eyes with the valley's beauty. Then join our campaign to let this canyon live.

Call: Helios Hernandez @ 945-4148 or e-mail hhernandez@nr.gov.mb.ca Or write: Manitoba Natural Resources - Parks & Natural Areas, Box 53, 200 Saulteaux Crescent, Winnipeg, Manitoba R3J 3W3

ECO

T.R.E.E. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

7 pm Wednesday, June 17, 1998

Manitoba Eco-Network #2 - 70 Albert Street

Since 1989, T.R.E.E. (Time to Respect Earth's Ecosystems) has been advocating a Forest Agenda for Manitoba that includes the creation of an ecologically-sound sustainable forest policy, the preservation of wilderness areas, provision for significant environmental assessments, research and a broadened public education on forest ecosystems. We have pursued this Agenda through the analysis of forest issues and initiatives, participation in policy deliberations, acting as a founding partner of

Manitoba Model Forest, intervening in environmental assessments, participating in Forest Resource Advisory Committees, and educating/lobbying. It's time to take stock and plan for the future. Our membership is open to both individuals and organizations. Please join us as we plan for the future. For more information or to express an interest, contact: Peter Miller: miller@uwinnipeg.ca ph: 452-9017 or Alice Chambers: chambers@granite.mb.ca ph: (204) 753-8348

COMPREHENDING TRANSPLAN

(Part II of a two-part series) by Jeff Lowe

In his first installment of this series, Jeff Lowe describes some of the recommendations found in the final report of Transplan 2010. This report was commissioned to set priorities for transportation infrastructure in the City of Winnipeg from 2000 to 2010, and was conceived as a companion document to the City's master land-use guidebook, Plan Winnipeg: Toward 2010. The current article suggests how the final report could deliver recommendations so at odds with the consensus developed by the participant groups in TransPlan's community consultation workshops.

Very early on (pages 23-24) in the TransPlan final report, the policy and funding priorities enunciated by all participant groups in the four rounds of community workshops are recounted as follows:

- "There is an immediate need for more than the current level of funding for future transportation infrastructure maintenance;
- "Funds should be allocated to correct 'bottlenecks' in the road system at about the same level in future as has been the case in the past, although the need is not as immediate as for maintenance;
- "The same or possibly less funding should be earmarked for future major road-system improvements, and these improvements should not be an immediate priority;
- "More funds should be allocated now as incentives to reduce automobile dependence, implement transportation demand management initiatives, and improve the transit system."

That this proved to be the consensus attests to Canadians' awareness of the manner in which overuse of fossil fuels and over-reliance on automobiles have contributed to the severity of the impact of the "greenhouse effect" on the planet's atmospheric regulatory mechanisms.

Thus it was disconcerting to read on and find that the list of recommendations as to specific project preferences and expenditure allocations formulated by the Steering Committee pointedly fails to follow suit - leaving one to ask how it was possible (in an environmentally-enlightened age) for an official policy document to be produced that is so exuberantly defiant of our obligation to act even-handedly in our provision of transportation facilities?

The sanctity of the car

The source of the resistance is invariably to be found in the mentality of the highway engineers who have ensconced themselves as the real "power behind the throne" in Winnipeg. While the same situation prevails in most North American cities, few any longer find their citizenry subjected to the degree of oppressiveness and entrenchment evidenced here. In fact, one might venture to observe that these convictions concerning the sanctity of the central role played by the car in the everyday affairs of the community are held with such fierce single-mindedness as to imitate religious fanaticism.

The assumption by Winnipeg's traffic engineers of discretion to deploy a virtual veto over any development they judged would adversely affect automotive interests dates from 1955. That year was a turning point in the power-struggle for control over the city's streets - because (as also happened around that time in almost every North American locality populous enough to be termed an

urban area) the last of the street railway routes that had occupied the centre of the right-of-way on Winnipeg's major arteries for seven decades saw its termination.

The event had significance in a very literal sense as a harbinger of the future of urban form. When traffic engineers succeeded in ousting streetcars, transit's position as a user of vehicular thoroughfares was downgraded from preferred to inferior status. That was because streetcars running on tracks set into the middle of the roadbed by dint of that arrangement exercised priority of way over all other forms of traffic. Traction companies were granted that privilege largely in recognition of the utility of promoting mass forms of people-movement over individual ones.

The busses that Winnipeg Transit substituted for streetcars since the latter were banished enjoy no operational advantage over any other form of vehicle with which they share the road. Busses transporting in excess of 60 passengers at once are no longer afforded any greater ease of mobility than private cars or trucks carrying only their drivers.

Having vanquished streetcars, Winnipeg's traffic engineers sought to ensure that that triumph would never be diluted or overturned. They have done their utmost to lay pre-emptive siege to any initiative that would tilt public preferences away from reflexive automobile usage for any conceivable purpose - or, physically or statutorily enhance the profile of non-automotive modes of transport (whether on- or off-street).

Sabotaging rapid transit

Since the first plan was drawn up to create a subway system in 1959, their opposition has been instrumental in sabotaging all attempts to win political consent for rapid transit. Aside from a very few short lengths of rush-hour, bus-only lanes and curbside bicycle markings on bridges and at underpass locations, they have staved off efforts to set aside portions of main traffic arteries that would enable public transit and cyclists to function under conditions of improved safety and trip-times. They continue to fight the implementation of an idea to bring back vintage streetcars on a comparatively selective basis as a means of providing an expanded and more effective version of circulator system for Downtown and inner-city shopping and residential districts than exists at present.

These aggressively protectionist tactics have lately been inflamed by a political orthodoxy that fosters an expectation of ever-declining dollars for expenditures on public assets. Mindful of this, highway engineers have come to approach the budgetary approval process as a version of "zero-sum" game. With the size of the funding "pie" consistently failing to keep pace with inflation, any increase in appropriations for other modes of transport implies there will consequently be less money available for building, expanding, or maintaining roads. That possibility in turn spurs the engineers to connive all the more to neutralize whatever inroads upstarts in the realm of non-automotive transport might achieve.

A closely related (and particularly spiteful) device they have wielded with devastating impact in keeping the upper hand in this bruising competition for public largesse has been to push for the



construction of new road- and bridge-building projects that are purposely designed to be massively overblown in relation to any reasonable expectation of maximum traffic levels they will be called upon to handle. This practice appears to be followed on the assumption that the more money lavished on automotive infrastructure, the less that will remain to be dedicated to environmentally-friendly alternatives to it.

Highway lobby dreads the impact

The highway lobby particularly dreads the potential impact of rapid transit on its own livelihood. With rapid transit corridors moving large volumes of people en masse, the need for the design and construction of new roads (as well as the expansion of the capacity of existing ones) is greatly lessened. Since rapid-transit infrastructure on average doesn't require overhaul or replacement for a period of twenty-five to forty years, much less work is generated for engineers and contractors than if roads are built exclusively to handle the same projected demand.

Another key tactical element reinforcing the skewed emphasis on private automobile usage is the series of standards in place to keep traffic moving through built-up areas at a near-breakneck pace. Speed limits of 60 kilometres/hour and upwards on primary arteries are the norm. The proliferation of signalized intersections is explicitly discouraged. Modifications to prevent traffic flow from being interrupted (such as right-hand turning ramps that bypass traffic signals or stop signs) are frequently encountered.

Plan Winnipeg Priorities and Transplan Funding Recommendations (millions of \$):

Major street maintenance in Wpg. . . .	300
Major bridge maintenance in Wpg. . . .	228
Prov. hwy's & bridges in Wpg. . . .	228
Regional street improvements	274
Transit maint & improvements	0

These steps help keep the car-owning public onside. By preventing congestion-induced delay from becoming a hindrance to driving, agitation on behalf of potential competitors (like rapid transit) is averted. Their success undermines traffic safety and tranquility in residential neighbourhoods, however.

That the traffic engineers feel so assured and justified in taking such an unyielding stance reflects their feeling that the status quo represents an optimal ordering of affairs. If a disproportionate amount of attention and resources is given to automotive issues and facilities, that's simply because it is (in their jaundiced view) "normal" and "natural" for anyone who can afford to own and operate a car ordinarily to always do so: only meddling by social interventionists interferes with that impulse.

It follows from this that other modes of travel would normally be disdained or overlooked by a "well-adjusted" person. Public transit is strictly for those whose inability or failure to purchase or have access to a car labels them, "losers". Cyclists and pedestrians are branded, "fitness nuts". Especial scorn is reserved for "oddballs" who - although they own (or have sufficient income to buy) a car - still opt voluntarily to bike, walk, or ride transit.

The needs of cyclists and pedestrians, furthermore, barely even enter into the traffic engineer's planning calculations. Because the former are few in number compared to the automobile and transit contingent, they tend to be looked upon purely as "hobbyists" - not as a legitimate factor in the commuter scene.

Transit performing in a subservient role

A lamentable by-product of the length of time this "auto-centric" regime has held sway is the extent to which even our transit officials have been worn down. While they are certainly desirous of seeing substantial improvements made to the transit system in Winnipeg, their aspirations as to the extent of what public transit can or ought to attempt to achieve are decidedly limited. They do not envision transit as capable of ever engaging the automobile in a vigorous, head-to-head competition for the lion's share of the commuter market. They concur in the notion that circumstances and human nature decree that transit "realistically" is suited only to performing in a subservient role.

What is scariest by far to contemplate about this whole scenario, though, is that many traffic engineers have actually succeeded in convincing themselves that their insular and twisted world-view represents an unsullied expression of the popular wisdom and will. In truth, the machinations and deceptions they engage in are just a self-aggrandizing and cynical means of perpetuating the hegemony that is most responsible for bestowing the blighted, unrelievedly traffic-ridden landscape of present-day Winnipeg upon us.

I realize it is a harsh portrayal I have drawn. But the frustration it betrays is gleaned from years of first-hand exposure (conversations included) to these individuals and their blinkered (and at times, even deranged) attitudes; and it explains how such an incredibly elaborate, costly, and damaging hoax as TransPlan can have been perpetrated.

It is said that in the end, people get the government they deserve. Surely Winnipeggers don't deserve this; neither does anybody else.

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The application of herbicides and insecticides to farm land is a cause of death for many prairie birds and mammals.

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**KEEP PESTICIDES OFF YOUR PLATE. SHOP ORGANIC...
FOR YOUR HEALTH, FOR THE PLANET.**

ORGANIC FOODS REGULATIONS UPDATE

In the last issue of Eco-Journal, we reported on new rules for organic food certification being proposed by the US Department of Agriculture. Chief among the many concerns raised by the new rules were proposals to include genetic engineering, food irradiation, animal cannibalism and the use of sewage sludge as processes acceptable for "organic" food. The new rules also would have forbidden state or private certifiers to set standards higher than the federal ones.

There is now good news to report, at least for the time being. The USDA received over 200,000 comments, including from international sources, the vast majority of which were highly critical of the proposal. It will now submit a revised proposal for public comment later this year, which will prohibit genetically engineered products, irradiation or sewage sludge. The US Secretary of Agriculture

stated that "Our task is to stimulate the growth of organic agriculture..." and "If organic farmers and consumers reject our national standards, we have failed". A spokesman for his office said "for anybody who thinks of organic farming as some fringe element...this has really proved them wrong". Organic farming is "very mainstream, it's very national and it's very big". This should be excellent news to Canadian organic producers as well.

It's important to note that the controversial issues will not fade away quietly, however, notwithstanding the USDA's apparent embrace of organics. The companies behind the push for lowering of organic standards are large and wield a great deal of power. Watch for future developments in this area.

With information from Pesticide Action Network, North America.

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VEGAN POWER TAKING ON TEXAS

continued from page 3 ...

When an operation on his spine with a one in a million chance of being successful allowed him to walk out of the hospital, Lyman was a changed man. He started down a path of self-education and discovery that eventually lead him to Washington DC where lobbying politicians for healthier farming practices taught him the 'golden rule'... 'Those that have the gold make the rules'.

Frustrated by the entrenchment of politicians with interests to protect, Lyman now focuses his work with the 'people'. His appearance last fall on the Oprah Winfrey show tossed him into the limelight after a consortium of Texan cattle ranchers took him to court for his comments on animal feeding practices. The cattle producers lost that case but have resorted to a lengthy, expensive appeal process in a move Lyman sees as the desperate, flailing act of a wounded beast.

Despite these personal difficulties, Lyman is on a crusade. He travels the country spreading the word about his conversion, revealing the truth about our brutality to other living creatures while dispelling the dietary myths perpetuated for decades by the cattle producers and dairy associations. He good-naturedly warns us all: "It's not what we know that gets us in trouble. It's what we THINK we know, that isn't so".

Lyman has faith that the growing number of youthful and determined vegans will eventually undermine the market for meat: he suggests 20% of the thinking popu-

lation will lead the unquestioning 80% down a leafy green path. And, with 9% of Americans avowed vegans (can Canadians be much different?), he thinks we're nearing 'critical mass' ... a point he believes requires just 11% of any population.

Interested in becoming vegan? *Vegan Outreach* has an excellent little resource guide to help you on your way. A copy is available in our Resource Centre.

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As a natural foods co-operative, Harvest Collective has its roots in a food buying club started in a community club basement nearly two decades ago. Today, Harvest provides consumers with high-quality organic foods in a community atmosphere out of two different neighbourhood stores.

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TREES FLATTENED BY BULLDOZERS

continued from page 1 ...

sprouting exits into the depths of the forest. As I passed these new entrances I strained to see what lay beyond my vision's reach. I wanted to know what kinds of sustainable forestry methods were practised behind that buffer of trees lining the highway. I ventured down one of these roads with a sinking feeling in my gut.

The land looked violated. Trees were flattened by bulldozers, land was permanently imprinted with huge tire tracks, and only the smallest trees remained standing. Maybe these were spared in the name of selective forestry. I returned to the highway disheartened and depressed over the fate of these forests. To my dismay, the next scene I witnessed was hundreds of flattened trees laying along the treeline for kilometre after kilometre. Apparently, the vegetation had crept too far forward to obstruct the view of passing motorists and had to be mowed down.

It has been argued that clear-cutting mimics forest fires. There are a few burned out forests on the Hansen Lake Road which have been standing for the last five years and are now starting to regenerate. Nature's burnt trees become nutrients for the soil and are important components in the continuation of the forest. Burnt out areas leave trees standing, provide cover for wildlife and create homes for birds. Small cut permits have been issued to independent loggers to salvage these trees. Accompanying these small operations are several temporary roads where people have just driven across the ditch with trucks and heavy equipment to stake their claim. When forests are harvested with machines it flattens and compresses the soil making regrowth more difficult.

Recently, an employee for Saskatchewan Resource Management told me that clear-cutting was the "only viable system in the boreal forest". Maybe he meant the only cost effective way because clear-cutting surely isn't the choice method for the woodland caribou, elk, black bears, wolves, cougars, and songbirds who live in those forests. Clear-cuts flatten the trees, pack the soil, leave wildlife in the open, and remove all but the least profitable vegetation.

Sustainability is continually tested

The sustainability of Flin Flon is continually tested by the one industry that employs a majority of families, by our isolation and by the small town mentality that most of us share. When things are good at the Company, we all breathe a sigh of relief and go back to our old routines. When things become rocky, people are motivated for change and the energy is amazing. However, the enthusiasm and activity is often short lived because once the crisis passes, we just sit back and relax. We have let the Company call the shots for the last 60 years and haven't believed them when they said "we'll close the doors". We are just now mobilizing an Economic Development Commission to create more business and economic growth in our community. We are beginning to realize that the future is in our hands. If we want Flin Flon to survive after HBM&S we have to start promoting Flin Flon's assets and stop limiting ourselves to the mining industry.

Living in an isolated community is one of the draws to the Flin Flon Area. We are over 400 km from the nearest city so we can find quiet spaces to relax and enjoy the outdoors. The fishing and wildlife in our area are plentiful and draw visitors from other parts of Canada and the US. Bear watching is a local attraction at the dumps when as many as ten black bears can be seen munching on our waste. People can still go to sleep with the doors unlocked as the crime rate is still quite low.

Our isolation creates challenges that are not easily overcome. We are far from other major centres so our gas and grocery prices are higher. Our local businesses often suffer as people, lured by lower prices, go out of town to buy groceries and clothing. There are few activities for teenagers and most involve drinking at someone's house or out in the bush. As a result, many of our teenagers have been killed in accidents where the driver had been drinking. The drive-in, which opens from May-October each year, is our only theatre and teens are drinking when driving from it. The future doesn't include Flin Flon and most spend their entire childhood wondering how to escape this slow-paced life of isolation.

I was one of those kids who grew up plotting to get out. I figured that I would leave and never come back. But the wildness of nature always draws me back. The short but hot summers are glorious enough to justify long months of winter and snowfalls in June! There are opportunities to boat, fish, and swim five minutes from my house and a large duck sanctuary is viewed from the kitchen windows. The northern lights are incredible and you can see a million stars on clear nights. The pace is slower, the expectations lower, and life is simpler. My connection with nature thrives here which drives me to fight for clean air, sustainable forests and the continuation of our community.

Source for health statistics: Jolly, A. and Blanchard, J. (1993) *Report on Selected Measurements of Health for Residents of Flin Flon, Manitoba*. Epidemiology Unit University of Manitoba. Winnipeg.

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Search the Green Lane for Environmental Information!



<http://www.mb.ec.gc.ca>

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SUMMER PROGRAMS



At the Riding Mountain Centre for Environmental Studies

Picture Perfect - Outdoor Photography introductory session and field day in the Park with Dave McArthur. Sunday, July 12, 9am to 3pm Fee: \$40

Taste of the Wild - Exploring Edible Plants with Dr. Gary Platford. A guided tour of

prairie, marsh and boreal forest zones along the Brule Trail. Saturday, July 18, 9am start. Fee: \$45

Head for the Hills - A Guided Hike to Bald Hill with J. Welstead, co-author of the Geography of Manitoba, and Park Naturalist, Roger Glufka. Round trip takes several hours and is an "arduous" hike. Saturday, July 25, 9am to 4pm. Fee: \$40

Green Day for Teachers - an opportunity to explore activities which enhance existing curriculum goals while providing hands-on opportunities to explore and learn about the environment. Instructors: Roger Glufka, Sandy Margetts, Heather Stewart. Monday, August 24, 9am to 4pm. Fee: \$40

For registration forms, call Riding Mountain Parks Plus People at (204)848-7284.



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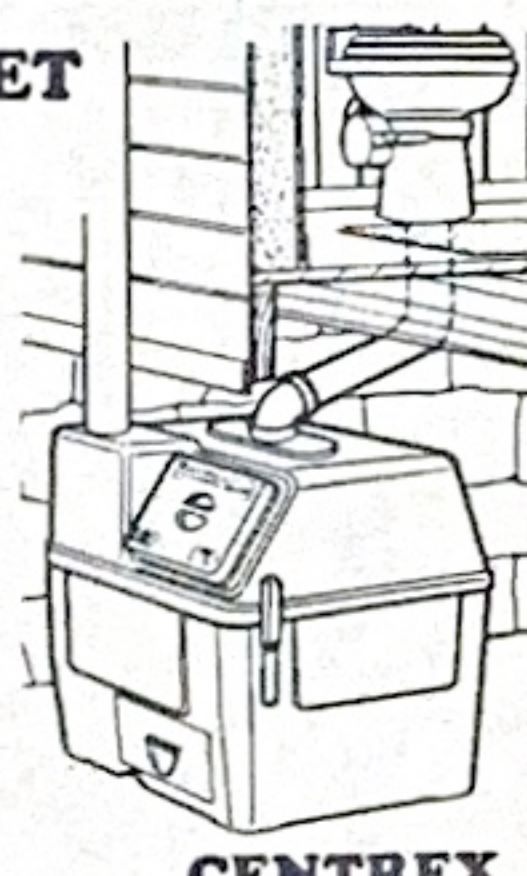
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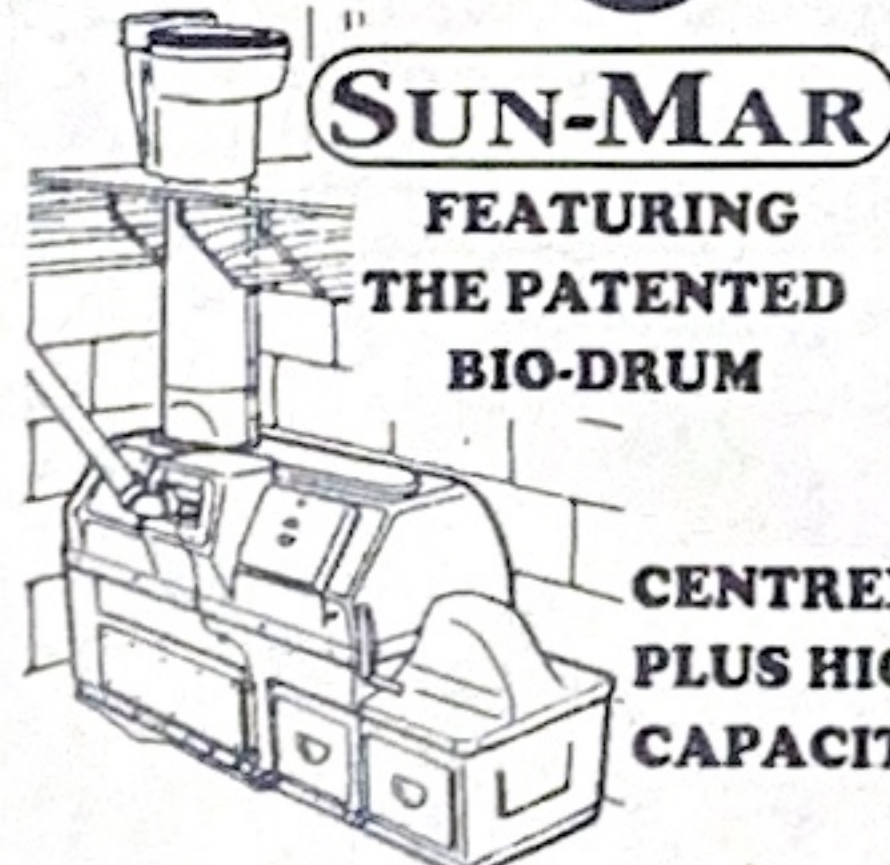
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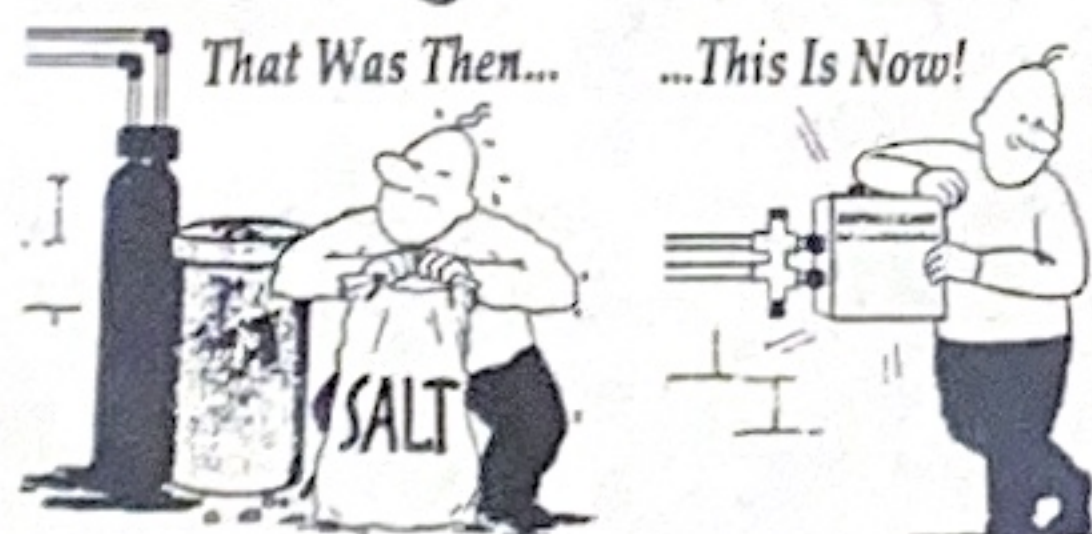


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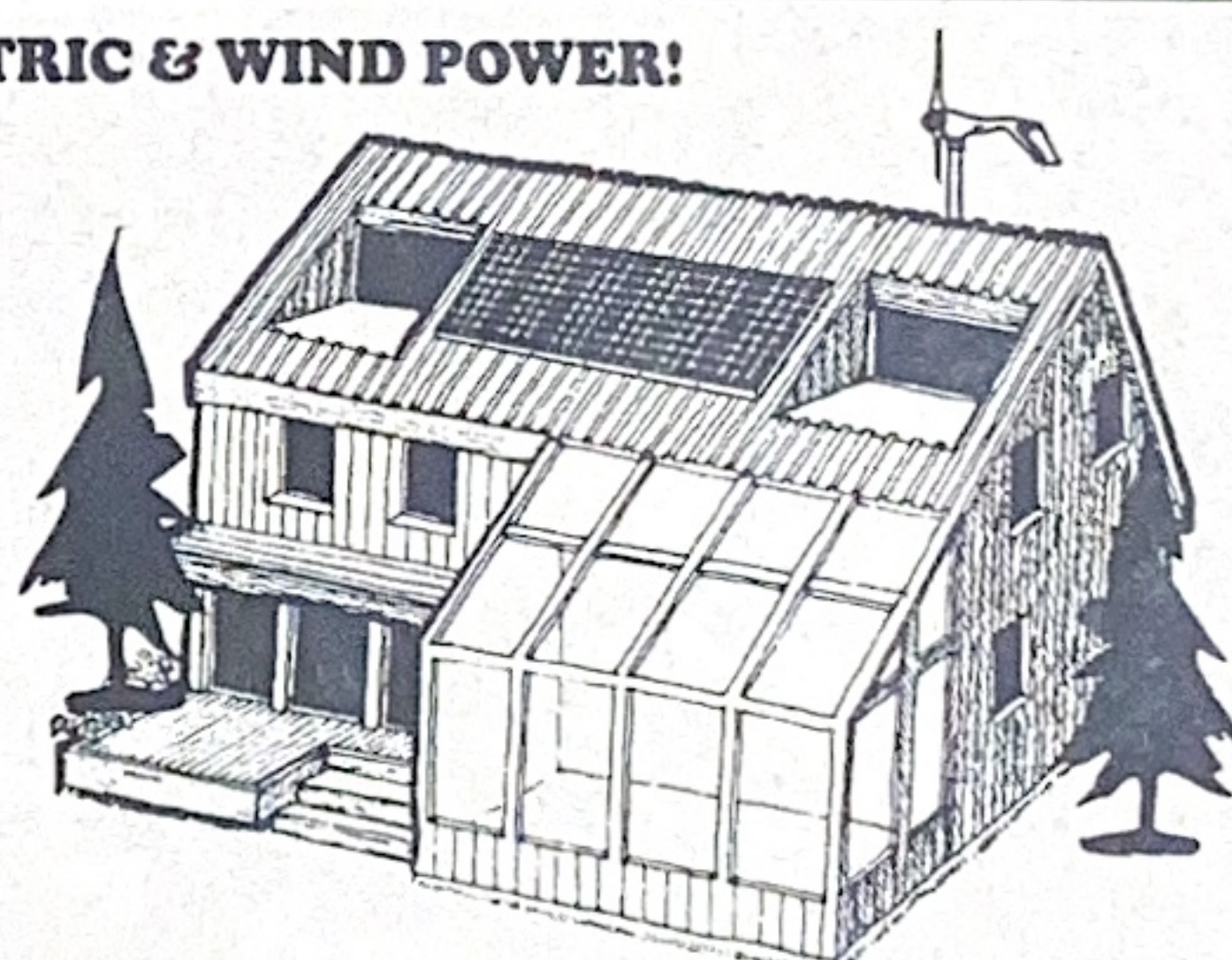
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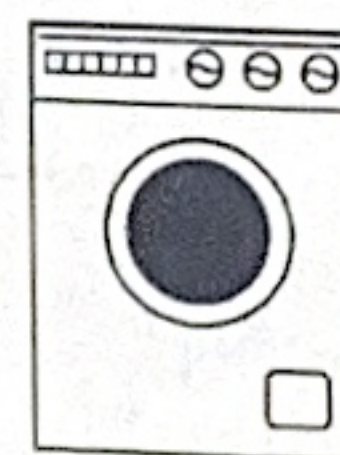


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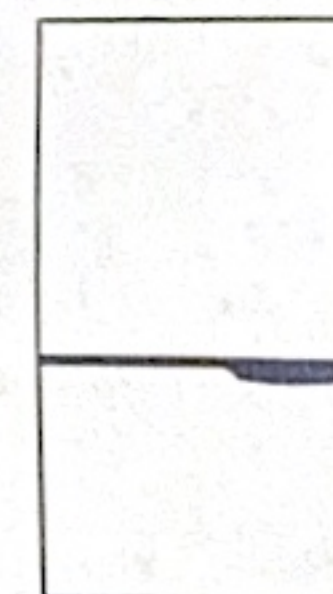
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ARE CARS DRIVING US TO THE BRINK?

by Randall McQuaker

"It's a neewwww CAAAARRRR!!!"

When television announcers bawl out their exciting descriptions of top prizes before frenzied audiences of game show fans, they are pushing one of North America's hottest buttons. We just love our cars. We pay dearly but willingly to buy, drive, fuel, fix, insure, park and shelter them. Millions of people around the world are housed in worse structures than we build for our cars.

We live our lives and even design our cities around the private automobile. About one-third of an average city's land area is devoted to providing cars with roads, parking lots and association services. In the United States, the figure is closer to fifty per cent, according to a report by the Worldwatch Institute. Some two per cent of the land area of the US has been paved for cars.

Winnipeggers take a back seat to nobody when it comes to auto travel. Their city's population increased by only 36 per cent between 1962 and 1992, but automobile registrations more than doubled during the same period. A transit survey of seven Canadian cities, reported in *Alternatives Journal*, found that Winnipeggers annually make fewer transit trips per capita than residents of Vancouver, Edmonton, Ottawa, Toronto or Montreal. Only Calgaryans make fewer trips. And among the seven cities, the percentage of commuter kilometres travelled by transit (as compared to cars) was lowest in Winnipeg (6.2 per cent), higher in Ottawa (9.4 per cent) and highest in Toronto (15 per cent).

The cost of this obsession is seldom fully appreciated. Individual car owners themselves pay for the purchase, operations and repair of their vehicles. They also shell out for parking, insurance and accident costs not covered by insurance. But those are not the only expenses tagged to auto use.

Social, economic and environmental costs

Transportation analyst Todd Litman reckons the social, economic and environmental costs of private vehicle use include road construction, roadway land value, municipal services devoted to traffic, reduced travel choices for disadvantaged people, air pollution, noise, resource consumption, loss of access and movement for pedestrians and cyclists, land-use impacts in suburban and ex-urban development, water pollution, and waste disposal.

Greenhouse gases are a matter of increasing urgency as production of greenhouse gases by automobiles in Canada rose 10.5 per cent between 1990 and 1995. Environment Canada estimates that the transportation sector (cars, trucks, buses, off-road vehicles) accounts for 23 per cent of greenhouse gases originating from human activities in this country.

Lack of transportation alternatives has fuelled car use in recent years. But earlier this century urban rail systems in North America carried millions of passengers in electrically powered trolley cars. Worldwatch's Michael Renner notes that in the 1930s General Motors and other players in auto-related industries started buying up US trolley systems and closing them down. Within 25 years, barely 10 per cent of these systems remained. Miles and miles of tracks were taken up or simply paved over.

Yet even vehicle drivers themselves want to see more and better travel alternatives in our cities. That's what a poll of more than a thousand Winnipeggers confirmed in 1995. Their survey was conducted as part of the City's TransPlan 2010 consultation process. Some 90 per cent of respondents said they take the car for entertainment or social visiting trips; 84 per cent use private vehicles

for shopping; and 71 per cent rely on autos for transportation to work or school. At the same time, 71 per cent agreed that maintaining and improving the transit system is a higher priority than building more streets. And over half (54 per cent) said they would use transit instead of private vehicle if service were improved.

Community planning

Policy-makers and planners have a wide range of instruments for encouraging travel by transit and moving away from ecologically costly private automobiles. These include improvements in bus design, provision of more transit shelters, measures to promote bus/bike commuting, technical efficiencies, designation of bus lanes, and installation of transit-preferring traffic signal systems. Community planning that provides access to needed services within walking distances is receiving increasing interest for its ecological as well as its social benefits. More contentious options, which have been implemented in a number of European cities, include parking bans or restrictions, auto-free central areas, licence surcharges, and fuel taxes.

Because our economy and culture are so auto-dependent, changes will come hard at both the individual and policy levels, as Manitobans struggle along with other Canadians to reconcile personal habits and perceived economic needs with their own emerging ecological concerns. What may be most effective ultimately is not a battery of new laws and regulations (some of which may well be needed in the interim), but the changes in public attitudes and values which will impose social sanctions on overuse of private vehicles.

Resource Conservation Manitoba (formerly the Recycling Council of Manitoba) will be taking up these issues in the months to come, seeking to play a constructive role consistent with our mission to promote ecologically sustainable, practical alternatives to currently unsustainable practices.

(Reprinted with permission from RCM, R-Report, April 1998)

Sources of Information:

Alternatives Journal, Vol. 24, No. 1., theme issue on cars versus transit, with articles by Tamin Raad and Jeff Kenworthy, Michael Torreyter, John Harman, John Pucher, Todd Litman, Winter 1998.

The Bicycle: Vehicle for a Small Planet, Marcia D. Lowe, Worldwatch Paper #90, September 1989.

Rethinking the Role of the Automobile, Michael Renner, Worldwatch Paper #84, June 1988.

Second National Report on Climate Change, Government of Canada, 1997.

TransPlan 2010: Moving Toward Solutions, Report on the future of transportation in Winnipeg, 1998.

ECO

Annual Walk for Peace June 13, 1998

12:00 noon at the Mb Legislature. 10:30 am Worship service at St. Stephen's Broadway United. The walk will be followed by entertainment in Memorial Park. For pledge forms or for a display table, call:

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NEW MATERIALS IN ECO-NETWORK RESOURCE CENTRE

Available for loan unless otherwise noted:

Elizabeth May's new book, *At the Cutting Edge: The Crisis in Canada's Forest*, a thorough overview of the situation in our forests from coast to coast, which Elizabeth compares to the situation in the Atlantic cod fishery just a few years back. A must read for forest activists.

A scholarly book by John Wargo: *Our Children's Toxic Legacy - How Science and Law Fail to Protect Us from Pesticides*. Wargo was a member of the National Academy of Sciences panel which assessed the exposures of children to dietary pesticide residues in the United States and called for drastic changes in how pesticides are regulated.

The Spring 1998 edition of the *Earth Island Journal* contains the usual excellent collection of environmental news from around the world, one article of particular interest: Sheldon Rampton's *The*

P.R. plot to overheat the Earth documents some of the truly astonishing public relations efforts of the oil, coal and gas industry to derail significant progress at the Kyoto Convention on Climate Change. As one reader observed: environmentalists are often painted as being "mired in conspiracy theory", but when you consider what's really going on, you know that we're not far off base.

Winnipeg's own John Sinclair (Natural Resources Institute, U of M) has produced an interesting new book: *Canadian Environmental Assessment in Transition* a look at how EA is changing in Canada, and what the implications are.

Bill Paton, Prof. at Brandon University, and guest speaker at our recent AGM provided us with a copy of his *Response to Proposed Livestock Regulations in Manitoba*, required reading for those interested in the ever-growing issue of intensive livestock operations in this province.

Susan Cuvelier, our Student Intern from January to March, has compiled the results of her literature and internet searches on the subject of endocrine disrupting chemicals and their impacts on human health. An annotated overview of the issues, including the controversy, is provided along with copies of many of the primary sources. (The binders are for use at the office only).

CPAWS Manitoba Coordinator Part-time Position

The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS) is looking for an energetic, organized individual to take on the position of Coordinator of the Manitoba Chapter. This is a challenging position, and an excellent opportunity to contribute to one of Canada's most respected wilderness advocacy organizations. The position is two days per week, at a salary of \$12,000. The position may become full-time as fund-raising efforts bear fruit.

The ideal candidate will possess strong written and oral communications skills, excellent organizational capabilities and a keen eye for detail. Proven computer skills are essential. We are looking for a self-starter with good people skills. A love of wilderness and a general understanding of environmental issues are definite assets.

REPLY TO: CPAWS Manitoba, P.O. Box 344, Winnipeg, MB, R3C 2H6. For further information call Scott Kidd at 477-0812 (eve).

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Group members are entitled to nominate representatives for a position on the Eco-Network Steering Committee. Group membership is open to any non-governmental, non-profit group which has as one of its objectives the enhancing or furthering of environmental quality, protecting the environment or environmental education.

A supporting membership includes a subscription to **Eco-Journal** as well as notice of events and regular updates on issues and is open to any individual.

