

# Forum's use of wood could be a blueprint for future scarcity

Renald Goldman photo



Wood is flesh inside one of the Forum's hangars.

BY JOAN HAGGERTY

**T**he site of Vancouver's Habitat Forum is a physical symbol of the spirit of the

conference: doing more with less. Over 450,000 board feet of lumber have been milled from driftwood and beachcombed logs by the Forum's own sawmill only a few hundred yards away from Vancouver's first mill at Jerry's Cove. And from this wood, five derelict military hangars have been turned into an ingenious and ample space to host several thousand visitors from a hundred eight different countries.

How did it happen? Many months ago, Terry Loychuck and Mark Osbourne saw the early designs, saw the buildings, got a vague idea of what was needed and then had beachcombers scour the beaches on Gambier way, over on Bowen, and along the Sound to Squamish. Terry went by car, by train, and by airplane to every beachcombers stash he could find and bought up everything that might conceivably be useful. Once the logs arrived on the site, they were bucked, put through the sawmill and used to build a theatre, two auxiliary stages, bleachers, the second-longest bar in the world, three covered walkways, restaurants, indoor and outdoor tables, wood sculptures, and a replica of old Pender Street. Then the sawmill itself was recycled into a stage.

Asked whether or not the lumber could have been purchased as cheaply, Loychuck explained that such a transaction wouldn't have been possible. The lumber was custom-made: the accidents themselves were used. The workers took

mation and, through this gate, you have a framed view down the windy apron to the Bill Reid mural on the end of Hangar 3. You turn onto a boardwalk, travel down a covered walkway (built with notched logs and roofed with recycled corrugated tin) and into Hangar 8, it and Hangar 7 are the two largest standing wooden structures in B.C. Here the alternate technology displays are framed by partitions of green/brown siding taken from an old barn in the Fraser Valley. Hangar 7, the social and entertainment building, contains the world's second longest bar topped with a slab of three-inch yellow cedar; the bar railing is mahogany, formerly a hunk of dunnage.

Both of these hangars are hung with colourful banners depicting B.C. landscape and lore, most of it stitched from donated bolts of schuss, a fabric used for making sporting goods. And everywhere outside are upended logs for seats and casual log planters.

The main Plenary Hall, Hangar 5, is an auditorium designed to accommodate masses of people in varied spacial arrangement; its platforms mount higher and higher up to the second storey windows held up by a maze of wood gridwork. This allows people to sit naturally at varying angles; staggered, grouped, comfortable. When the doors of Hangar 5 are open, the audience looks beyond the speaker to the whole shore of mountains. The city's volunteer workforce spent two days sanding down the seats.

Down either side of yet another hangar are small conference and media rooms finished in soft reflective cedar and fluted with valances and fascia. These touches are emblematic of a growing indigenous 'counter-culture' if you will, B.C. architectural style. Very soft and peaceful, these rooms. Also in

give up. You find that force and let it express itself." "Wood is flesh," says Georganna as she works on her maypole. Creatures half wood and half human take shape. It is the first time that woodworkers of all sorts have been able to work on location together to use wood the way it wants to be used, leaving its history wide open.

Outside this hangar is the east gate: a giant fir log hoisted between two upright firs to form a massive piece of woodhenge. The westgate is a series of logs bolted together to form a half-ferris wheel. The north gate is the sea.

What about Habitat Forum's waste products? True to form, they are recycled. An outfit called Canada Car was given a big bagful of bark and pulp which they turned into presto logs and pressed boards. These will be displayed at the Forum. Canada Car has also developed techniques for making western wheat board from chaff and rice board from rice husks. People arrive every evening to pick up free firewood from the massive scrap pile.

In effect then, the Jericho workforce has effectively disproved the theory that building from driftwood and beachcombed logs is impossible because the salt and metal in the wood causes too much wear and tear on the sawmill.

Much to their delight, the operators discovered that they only needed to sharpen their headsaw once a day, the same as in any standard operation. The sawmill broke down only ten times in five months because of iron in the logs, even though they put every type of wood through the mill, some of it in reasonably good shape and some of it a mess: deadheads, logs covered in half an inch of river silt, old wood for those who'd

# Joe Morris and C.L.C. take union politics out of the Dark Ages

BY JOHN GREGORY

**L**ast week, a working class Lancashire lad assisted in the midwifery of of Canada's future.

Joe Morris, president of the Canadian Labour Congress, has drawn the disparate elements of the nations' trade union movement together to support Canada's first and most comprehensive public platform planning our economic and social direction.

The CLC Manifesto for Canada does not contain a radically different approach to changing the country's institutions but it's overwhelming endorsement, by the majority of delegates representing so many working people, is nothing less than impressive.

This document walks union politics out of the dark age demands for more money and more work and into a light, wrought by Joan of Arc herself. When has a group of such political strength been so open about what it stands for? Joe

Morris said that any discussion between the CLC and government must centre around the manifesto.

We can be optimistic because John Munro called the meeting to communicate to labour the direction government is taking and, of course, ask Labour's view. He felt that communication had either been too infrequent or unsuccessful in the past.

No doubt in mid-June government and labour reps will emerge from their forum saying the discussion was fruitful and little else will occur for some time.

But Joe Morris is a man who does not give in easily. He talks straight, sometimes ridiculously so.

When one reporter asked Morris why the CLC's opposition to wage and price controls had not been more of a protest, The CLC president lifted his bulk and stretched across the table holding his microphone to assault the newsmen so: "We're the only ones who protested controls, and you better not forget that, baby".

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# Habitat Forum's wood

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

In the future years when the demands on our wood supply become impossible to meet, we will be forced to make use of the accumulated driftwood on our province's beaches. Now we have at Jericho a perfect control experiment to be watched over the years for checking, shrinking and duration. It will be interesting to see just how quickly the salt does eat away the wood fibres. People in the forestry service and wood industry would do well to conduct a fullscale inventory of what is on our beaches as a natural and imperative follow-up to the contribution made at Jericho.



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