

Introducing That New Area



Walking Our Talk

by Leslie Scott, General Manager

A little more than a year ago, we began planning for Phase II of the Left Bank relocation. A great deal of advance work was necessary to get us to this point, and I want to highlight some of that preparation to provide some context and continuity for the process that has culminated in what you see on these pages.

When the Left Bank was originally planned the Fair was smaller and the rate at which relocation needs were anticipated was based mostly on issues of riverbank erosion. With rapidly rising attendance and the concomitant increases in crews, services and vendors, our paths became congested, dusty and degraded, so the Board of Directors capped attendance in '93.

We knew then we were going to have to do a larger, more concentrated relocation and reconfiguration of space to relieve congestion, but also most of Security Crew was camping in the planned replacement area.

This meant first relocating some 300 members of Security PLUS their significant others, families, kids and even horses. BUT WHERE on our site was there room for this size group other than a parking lot?

It just so happened at that time we began a dialogue with the City of Veneta about collaborating on a more environmentally appropriate process for dealing with their sewage effluent which was being sprayed on the Larson property just east of the Fair site. While researching ownership and land use issues around this, I discovered there was a large parcel of land owned by Veneta on the other side of the Long Tom from the Fair site that ran from the highway to the top of Pike Street and beyond. Even more interesting was the fact that on this land is a borough pit dug as an expansion site for a sewage lagoon!

Alarmed, we got busy and bought that portion of the Larson property being sprayed, and offered to trade it to the City of Veneta for their land next to the Long Tom, on which we could then camp. We also got an EPA Watershed Enhancement grant, out of which came a six-part proposal for a Long Tom Greenway, but that's another story. The swap has been delayed until the DEQ approves Veneta's Facilities Plan (and they know exactly what land base they need for their proposed alternative waste water disposal), but we have leased it for camping in the interim and received approval this year to develop the campground we call the Far Side. Whew!!!

Also in '96, the County informed us we were going to have to establish 40-60 foot fire breaks in the paths, and follow guidelines for temporary or permanent structures. This was part of a whole complex of compliance issues with which we've been dealing, but that's yet another story. However, this became another factor to incorporate into our path planning efforts.

The hundred-year floods of the last two winters have been really hard on our land, in part because of our ever larger footprint. This caused us to take a long hard look at what we say is our highest value, reverence for the land, and acknowledge that the way we have been building, camping and clearing our land does not reflect that value. This raised the biggest issue of all for us...how to balance the very real and pressing needs of our event with our reverence for the land. How do we get the job done without compromising our values—how to walk our talk? This meant paying attention to how we planned as well as what we planned.

All this came together last April; I knew I needed some help, big time. Fortunately for us all, I didn't have to look far. Former GM and current back-up manager, Sallie Edmunds, had just moved to Oregon from Hawaii where she'd been Chief Planner in the Department of Land and Natural Resources, responsible for the Hawaii Water Plan. I wish I had the space to list the level and range of responsibilities that job en-

tailed, and the praise heaped on her by supervisors, co-workers and environmental organizations, and describe the incredible level of intelligence, insight and skill she has brought to the job of back-up manager, but suffice it to say, when she agreed to lead this relocation planning effort I was overjoyed.

Sallie designed an inclusive and comprehensive community planning process that I think should serve as a model for future projects of this kind. We agreed to establish a set of planning principles to guide us through the process, which you will see printed elsewhere in these pages. To give as many people as many opportunities to participate as possible, we scheduled a series of workshops and meetings in town and at the Fair site, each of which was published in the *FFN*. At the meetings there was plenty of time for comment, input and information exchange; minutes were taken and along with comments, carried forward and incorporated into ensuing meetings. Paralleling this part of the process were many operational meetings with all the affected areas, in consultation with the LUMP Committee and VegManEcs.

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Sallie also pulled together a Path Planning Committee that includes some of the most creative, caring and hard working people in the Fair. Last month's *FFN* listed them and the roles they played. We all owe them a great deal of thanks for the literally hundreds of volunteer hours they have spent on this project. Some of them, such as Reese, Kirk and Sallie, have driven

from Portland to attend meetings for the entire year! All of them have done this in addition to the volunteer jobs they do for the Fair, really an astounding contribution.

The concerns raised throughout the process, combined with the number of issues and priorities we were juggling, led us to propose a multi-phased range of relocation scenarios. These were presented to the Board of Directors at their October meeting, and they decided the Phase I relocation should indeed take place in the Left Bank Security Meadow. We began working with that site in a much more focused way and simultaneously identified all those booths to be relocated in this first phase. We invited all the booth reps to a meeting in January, and began to assess in detail their specific needs. A site map was presented and we discussed plans for entertainment and activities in the area. Since then we have been drawing, refining, honing, debating, integrating, deciding, appealing those decisions, deciding again and finally siting.

So here we are, after a long, complex yet exhilarating process; at times a wild and crazy ride. Activities and entertainment have taken shape as you can read about on these pages. Booth claim day is May 18th, and our artisans and eateries can begin to imagine themselves in their new homes. The budget has been completed and passed. VegManEcs have begun opening spaces in the most sensitive way possible. We can all breathe a little more easily knowing that we have a wonderful, new and very different YES, YES, YES kind of place to celebrate and enjoy with our public family this year. When we do Phase II in a year or so, we'll have valuable lessons that should carry us forward in a way that lets us walk our talk even better!



New Loop Phun

by Hilary Anthony



At the new loop meeting held in January at Lane Community College in Eugene, people brainstormed ideas about what we could do in the space. We talked about balloon rides, carnival games, juggling...That same weekend some of us walked the site. The meadow at the new area is different from other places we have in the Fair—it is a large open space with a park-like feel. People can do different things and see what is going on in other places. At that meeting about half a dozen people volunteered to be on a task force to pull together activities that are compatible, festive and participatory for that space.

For this year, we will have a kids craft area tucked in near the crafts lot. Beside that will be a tent holding the altars and craziness of the First Church of Phun (thanks to David Paul). A space in the meadow is set aside to be used by jugglers—mostly for playing. We will have some teachers for beginners, some demonstrators for advanced skills.

There will be a yurt where Tom Noddy will blow bubbles—he hasn't had a wind-free site to make bubbles at the Fair for years. Here's your chance to see a square bubble. We will have workshops in the yurt as well—a poetry Howl, maybe some yoga, some circus skills.

We are lining up toys for the meadow—a solar powered bubble machine (not Tom), a sculptural oracle, large balloons to toss out for fun periodically.

Some of the best carpenters of our generation are working on the architectural centerpiece of the meadow—the Gazebo. We will fill it with vaudevillians and musicians for your entertainment pleasure.

Come, lie in the sun and listen to music; have a religious experience at the First Church of Phun or throw some balls around. See ya there.

