

Continental Cordwood Conferences

CoCoCo: An ongoing celebration

Once every five or six years a Cordwood Conference is held where cordwood builders meet to discuss fresh innovations and renew old friendships. The first one was held in 1994 in West Chazy, New York at the cordwood home of Rob & Jaki Roy, who were the inspiration for these events. Pompanuck Family Farm, Cambridge, New York hosted the 1999 gathering. At each conference Papers were written and presented, home tours were arranged, mortaring styles demonstrated and friendships cemented. The largest gathering, with 227 'CoCoCoNuts' was in 2005 in Merrill, Wisconsin, hosted by Richard & Becky Flatau. In June of 2011 the first Canadian Cordwood Conference, hosted by Dr. Kris Dick, was held at the University of Manitoba. This rich heritage is bound to continue as long as people are eager and willing to share their discoveries.

Continental Cordwood Conference 2011

June 11-12, 2011

University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada

The Conference started with a three day cordwood workshop from June 8-10 at the Alternative Village at U of M. The Alternative Village was founded by the engineering department to establish a vehicle for research on renewable energy and alternative building materials.

A building framework was erected by the engineering graduate students. It was approximately 12' x 16' but because it contains many purposely engineered, whimsical irregular angles that is certainly not the actual square footage.

Dr. Kris Dick, Cliff Shockey and Richard & Becky Flatau served as instructors. 17 students came from the graduate engineering program and from around the world: Sweden, Iran, Honduras and from many parts of Canada. We called one group the 'Fab Five' who bonded and worked closely with one another to offer support and inspiration. One gentleman changed his whole building design during the workshop.

The building (which will be used as an Entrance Kiosk to the Alternative Village) is to be a model of research for cordwood. The strategy was to build and demonstrate as many different cordwood styles, mortars and types of wall as possible.

We tried:

- Hemp hurds (the waste produce of industrial hemp) in the mortar & insulative cavity
- Traditional sawdust mortar & sawdust insulation
- Cellulose mortar & cellulose insulation
- Double wall with hemp hurd mortar on the outside wall
- Cob and cordwood on the west section

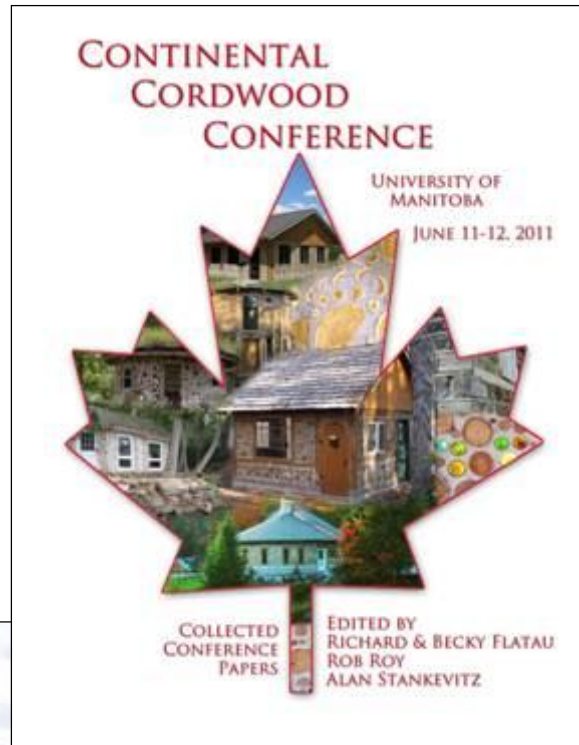
Bottle ends were placed in the walls, along with stones, dimensional lumber and a metal bottle-end with the initials of each participant hand-stamped. Three days of building, discussion and conversation produced a cohesive team that enjoyed working and learning together.



The Cordwood Conference was coupled with the engineering department's annual Design Day Conference and in keeping with that tradition, the Saturday portion of the conference was an amalgamation of topics: strawbale, hempcrete, recycling, green roof, green energy and cordwood. Each registrant had an opportunity to sample three of the six formats. We then moved to the Alternative Village to see first hand the research that was taking place. Cordwood demonstrations were conducted with double wall and single wall mortars. We were also able to see the original U of M stackwall building from the mid-70's.

On Sunday we got down to the business of cordwood presentations from the Cordwood Conference Papers 2011. There was a video on slipforming with doublewall cordwood, presentations on cordwood in Sweden, special effects, Paper Enhanced Mortar, double wall + balewall, community constructed cordwood, a cordwood cottage garden shed, engineering perspectives, and lessons learned. *A special power point tribute was shown about the life of Jack Henstridge (the Grandfather of Cordwood), in whose memory the conference was held.*

The presentations were portions of the



130 page *Cordwood Conference Papers 2011* which were given to each conference attendee. The Papers are the latest information in the ever evolving field of cordwood.

(www.daycreek.com)

All things that have a beginning, have an ending, and the ending to this Conference was very magical, because

we were able to visit two cordwood/stackwall + balewall homes. Since we personally

could only visit one home, we went to Clint and Cindy Cannon's double wall and balewall hybrid home. It was absolutely gorgeous. It brought the conference to a most harmonious conclusion since we journeyed during the five days, metaphorically, from cordwood construction theory, to hands-on building practice, to discussions of the various wall & mortar types; we witnessed impressive cordwood power point presentations and finally we arrived at the gestalt of being able to see the whole process in a beautifully constructed cordwood home.

In my humble opinion the marriage of double wall with balewall makes perfect sense on the cold, windy Canadian prairie.



Cliff Shockey demonstrates how to erect a double wall to keep the cold Canadian air out of one's cordwood home.

Clint & Cindy Cannon's beautiful double stackwall and strawbale home in Antelope Valley, Manitoba. The Cannon's were gracious hosts for the home tour segment of the Conference.

www.cordwoodconstruction.org
www.cordwoodconstruction.wordpress.com

