

Cancun Journal #8: Tuesday, 9/1/03

Excitement Building!

Another long day of meetings, not yet over. But the energy is starting to build. The Circus, the group of central organizers, met at 10 a.m. Our permaculture team met at 11:00. (Add half an hour to each!) We've gotten some wonderful people turning up--Scotty from Texas who has done a whole training program in constructed wetlands, Lou from England, Maria who is a local woman who has come down to help us and is just the contact we need to find out things like where you can find used barrels in Cancun. (Not easy!) We've already learned a few things--like the dumps here are not treasure troves of useful objects because nothing much that can be used is ever thrown away. And things like 55-gallon drums are sold, not tossed out.

We have a good meeting, setting out priorities, dividing into groups to work on certain aspects of the project. Meanwhile between me and Rodrigo we finally get hold of our contact from the city, who tells us to come in later and she will see what tools they can lend us. So we're official! It's a great boost to our morale, and we schedule a work day for tomorrow.

I manage to grab some quesadillas before the direct action meeting at 1:00. I count forty people at the midday meeting, many of them new. In the middle, our friends from Mexico City arrive. I'm very excited to see them, and grateful that they can now report for themselves on what the students are planning.

At the end of three hours of discussion, we have refined a couple of proposals which may or may not work but have that solid feel of the best that can be done in a bad situation. I rush out before the meeting is over to join Rodrigo and meet first with Patti from the municipality and then with the man who is actually responsible for the grounds and cleanup at the Casa de la Cultura. Rodrigo does most of the talking and I am grateful for his charm.

At the end of the meeting, I don't know whether to laugh or

cry. The city council has ordered the removal of every rock and stone from the grounds of the Casa de la Cultura. Every stick or branch or anything that can possibly be used as a weapon is supposed to go. The city might grant camping space to potential terrorists, but by all the Mayan Gods, they are not going to furnish us with projectiles. Never mind the fact that Cancun is littered with rocks on every street corner or vacant lot, and still has strips of jungle within it where sticks abound.

Any halfway enterprising thug should have no trouble arming him- or herself, regardless of how clear the ground may be at the Casa.

But we are underway with our project, even if all the beautiful resources of rocks and mulch are being bulldozed off the terrain. And, we learn, the city is not piping in water and such showers as there are will be in a completely different location, so if it stops raining our installations may run dry. But we'll work something out. At least we've finally begun!

More and more people are coming into town, and the energy is definitely rising. In spite of the frustrations, we're doing a lot of great, creative work together. And now for some dinner....

-- *Starhawk*

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