



Everyone Should Live in the City

I was intrigued by Mr. Shelton Lankford's utopian view of the future of small town America (“Peak Oil and Relocation,” in the August 14-20 issue of the CSA newsletter.) A recent article in *Urbanite*, a Baltimore-based monthly magazine for city dwellers, addressed the same phenomenon from the angle of family structure, saying that the “1950s...are, for many today, the baseline of ‘family.’ The new medium of television imprinted the Cleavers, Nelsons and Andersons (of *Father Knows Best*) indelibly on the national consciousness.”

But the notion of the extended family living happily beneath one roof in a village is as far from reality in the American future. Recall for a moment the political map of the last presidential election and one reason is starkly revealed. The red states, ostensibly the places that would be *least* likely to accept being “divorced by necessity from oil-based agri-business” happen also to be the land of small towns and villages. The blue states, the last refuges of those progressive enough and with adequate social consciousness to face the end of the cheap oil party with some measure of pragmatism rather than greed and arrogance, are home to most of the densely-populated cities in the nation.

David Owen wrote of the utopian community in which he and his wife decided to live (“New York City is the Greenest City in America,” *New Yorker*, October 18, 2004.) By almost every imaginable measure, New York is the most environmentally-responsible community in the nation and New Yorkers are the epitome of green Americans. Curiously enough, the reason is exactly the same thing upon which Mr. Lankford based his hopes for an America of small towns surrounded by productive farmland: The end of cheap oil.

City dwellers consume a fraction of the energy demanded by suburbanites and small town residents. “The average Manhattanite consumes gasoline at a rate that the country as a whole hasn't matched since the mid-nineteen-twenties,” Mr. Owen said. “New York City is more populous than all but eleven states; if it were granted statehood, it would rank 51st in per-capita energy use.”

New Yorkers live in the most energy-efficient and environmentally-responsible spaces imaginable: apartment buildings. They almost exclusively use public transportation, or they walk, ride bicycles or skate to work in equally efficient skyscrapers. If all 8 million lived in the same density as everyone else in America (three households per acre) they would sprawl over an area as big as all six New England states plus Delaware and New Jersey.

Obviously, cities have their own unique problems. There is crime, noise, rodents, air pollution. However, like Mr.

Owen, I believe that “barring an almost inconceivable reduction in the earth's population, dense urban centers offer one of the few plausible remedies for some of the world's most discouraging environmental ills.” What should be easier to correct? Global warming or urban crime? Sea level rise or trash in the street? Deadly and global non-point source pollution or urban poverty (and related crime)?

Cities also have their own unique advantages. Cultural and educational benefits are the most obvious, but the richness of social diversity also comes to mind. One can walk to work, walk to the grocery store, walk to the library and the theatre, walk to the park, walk to the doctor's office. Along the way one is likely to pass people from every station in life and every nationality and you know what (I know this from having walked the streets of downtown Baltimore)? They are all friendly, interesting and non-threatening. Where do progressive people gather to hammer out liberal social policies and to attack universal problems with some measure of rationalism, and where do the resources to address these problems lie? Mayberry or Manhattan?

Imagine the vast expanses of land that could revert to agriculture should everyone choose to live in a New York-like habitat. We would consume *one fifth* the amount of energy per capita as we do in the great suburban and small town sprawl that is America today. Renewable energy sources would be infinitely more practical and the delivery of energy much more concentrated and effective. Pressure on living resources beyond the boundaries of the cities would be negligible. Pollution would all be point-sourced, easier to tackle than the non-point sources that plague us now, and water quality would be dramatically improved.

Ask anyone who lives in Baltimore city “Where do you live?” The answer is not “Baltimore,” but “Hampden,” “Union Square,” “Mount Vernon,” “Canton,” all which exemplify the same village characteristics for which Mr. Lankford wisely longs. In these communities, “the extended family may reassert themselves as organizing principles in the world of tomorrow.” “Luxuries” like international travel and even recreation on the lands restored to wilderness will be more accessible and less environmentally costly if mass transit were used by everyone; luxuries to which many of us have become accustomed and which I believe Mr. Lankford would be loathe to deny to everyone.

The city is the future not only of America, but for the entire human species, and it is the future for exactly the reasons that Mr. Lankford lays out in his thesis advocating villages and small towns. Organic farming is another issue altogether. Sadly, we cannot all know our farmers personally without living in proximity to farms. There are too many of us. That is sprawl. Sprawl is deadly, whether it be suburbia or the less noxious small town variety.

This was submitted by Ron Pilling. Ron and his wife Pat are CSA members from Berlin. Ron is a past president of the Assateague Coastal Trust.

In your share
Peppers
Eggplant
Napa Cabbage?
Acorn Squash
 or
Sweet Potatoes

CALLING ALL CSA KIDS!!!

Come to Ted's farm on Sunday October 15, 2006 at 3:00 for some fabulous organic pumpkin pickin' just in time for Halloween.

Two things -- Please RSVP to Amy Liebman and let her know how many kids you plan to bring with you. (We're trying to figure out how many pumpkins we will need). Right now all we have in store is pumpkin picking, but it would be an even finer event if someone wanted to VOLUNTEER so we could have some fun kids' crafts activities....Let Amy know.

FINAL HARVEST POTLUCK & GLEANING OF THE FIELDS

Come celebrate the end of the season with a shared meal and help yourself to the goodies remaining in the field. Sunday, November 19 at 2:00 pm. VOLUNTEER(S) are needed to coordinate the potluck. Please let Amy Liebman know if you are willing to head up this fabulous event.

More recipes from the first four years of Provident Organic Farm CSA may be found on our website:

www.providentfarm.org

Recipes are indexed by individual vegetable.

Please email your recipes to Theresa Connelly (MightyTeaOne@cs.com).

Baked Acorn Squash with Pear and Apple

2 medium acorn squash, halved and seeded

Preheat the oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Butter a baking pan. Place the squash cut side down in baking pan. Add 1/4 inch hot water to the pan and bake for 45 minutes.


Meanwhile, mix in a medium bowl:

2	large apples, peeled, cored, and diced
1	ripe pear, peeled, cored and diced
1/4 cup	dried currants, raisins or dried cranberries
2 Tbs	packed dark brown sugar
1 small orange	grated zest
1/4 tsp	ground cinnamon
1/8 tsp	freshly grated or ground nutmeg
2 Tbs	butter
1/4 cup	apple cider or orange juice
1 Tbs	bourbon or dark rum (optional)

Heat the butter in a large skillet over medium heat until melted. Add the apple mixture and cook until the fruit is golden brown, about 5 minutes. Stir in the apple cider and bourbon. Simmer, stirring often, until the fruit is tender, about 8 minutes. Remove the squash from the oven; pour off the water from the pan and turn the squash cut side up. Fill the squash with the apple mixture. Bake until the squash is tender, about 15 minutes more.

Serves 4.

This recipe comes from Peggy Buchness. She says sweet potatoes can also be used in place of the squash.



THE LEADER IN ORGANIC-BASED LAWN CARE

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Comments & Contributions

We welcome your comments and contributions, including recipes! Please send to ubuubok@comcast.net or Provident Organic Farm CSA, PO Box 62, Bivalve, MD 21814.