

No. **4346**

The Young and the Roofless

PHOTOGRAPH BY GREG SIPLE STORY BY GAGE POORE

→ “THE HARDEST PART OF THE TRIP was to just start, to just go. The second hardest part was to stop. But much like a seed, the end is just the beginning,” wrote Vickie Ly (left) regarding her journey from Berkeley, California, to New York City with companions Kory “Koko” Barrios (center) and Carmen Taylor (right). The group titled themselves Seeds to Cities (seedstocities.com) and rode to explore how the connection between rural and urban environments creates American food systems. Producing radio shows along the route, the team pedaled in search of stories from backyard gardeners and industrial farmers alike, trying to learn “how food connects to the culture and tradition” of each region of our vast country.

While visiting our office in Missoula, though, Vickie admitted their trip was really to “find and meet people to laugh with, to play with, to sing, dance, make good food, and fall into the night.” Having been warmly greeted and toured around the Adventure Cycling headquarters, the girls were giddy — and bordering on silly — by the time they were eating lunch in the HQ courtyard from a mildly beaten-up pink Voodoo Doughnuts box they had carried from Portland, Oregon. Somehow I knew they would have no trouble meeting people on their trip. “Strangers took us in, so many of them,” Vickie wrote. “They became our teachers, our family, our guardians. We learned to trust.” Through these relationships they gathered the “stories of seeds — how people exchange them, trade them, and grow them.” They learned how seeds become the roots of our culture as well as our existence, collecting them as they collected stories. “I carry seeds from Karen Schwartz, a farmer in Culdesac, Idaho, who created a hybrid of Hubbard’s Gourd and Banana Squash with a man by the name of Virgil Mattson. I carry seeds from Don Tipping in Williams, Oregon, who listens to the band Living Dead while planting seven-star zucchini. This is how we carry traditions and cultures and foster them to be inherited in the future.”

After ending their journey, they have begun cutting audio and working on short stories. They have dreams of creating live-performance radio plays from what they gathered. According to Vickie, their goal was a success, “Slowly, we peeled back everything that we have built, everything we have created — physically in the rows of corn, wheat, barley, or skyscraping buildings.” Regarding their cross-country cycling experience she wrote, “I like to think of us as young and ruthless, young and roofless. It takes courage, outright silliness, and trust to just go.”

Bring the **Bicycle Eclectic** traveling portrait exhibition to your town. Contact Greg Siple for more information: gsiple@adventurecycling.org

Bicycle Eclectic Adventure Cycling’s traveling exhibition of photos from the National Bicycle Touring Collection can be seen at the Thunder Island Brewing Company, 515 NW Portage Rd, in Cascade Locks, Oregon, May through June.



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