

APA

Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

Conference News

Welcome to San Francisco!

by Hartmut Gerdes, Communications Director

You may be getting ready by now to pack your bags for your trip to the warm and windy, wild and wonderful city of San Francisco to attend our APA National Conference. As your Northern Section Board's Communications Director, I want to wish you a pleasant and enlightening journey - and extend the Board's special welcome.

Your Board members would like to meet you and help in any way we can during your brief visit. Being a frugal organization, we have no welcoming offices and comfortable lounge chairs to offer. But you will recognize us nonetheless by the purple dot on our name tags.

Peter Calthorpe to Provide Tour of Future Pedestrian Pocket in Colma

Space is still available on Mobile Workshop 21, "BART Comes to San Mateo County." Urban designer Peter Calthorpe and Takis Salpeas, BART's West Bay Extension Project Manager, will guide you through the Colma BART Station Specific Plan area. Preregister or sign up for the April 18th event at the conference.

Don't Miss APA's Exclusive Performance of Beach Blanket Babylon

If you've never been able to get tickets, here's your chance to enjoy San Francisco's wackiest, longest-running musical review. APA has booked the entire theater on April 19th for the National Conference. Plus, you need not be registered for the conference to attend.

The ticket price (\$39, payable at the conference) will include theater admission and transportation from the Marriott Hotel to North Beach and back. Dining at one of the many fine North Beach restaurants is encouraged on your own. Don't miss this unequalled camp extravaganza!

Networking Event Needs Your Support

The Student/Planner networking breakfast, part of the National Conference, will provide an opportunity for students to meet with professionals in an informal environment, explore the "real world" of planning, and make important "networking" contacts for the challenging job search effort.

Professionals can help make the breakfast a success by attending the breakfast, and by sponsoring a student's attendance with a \$15

contribution to offset the cost of the students' breakfast. We need your support to make this event a success! In return, you get "extra credit" for good behavior, especially if you're an AICP member (see section C.6 of the Code of Ethics).

For additional information, contact Patricia Jeffery at 510/524-7980, or send your check payable to "Northern Section CCAPA," c/o Patricia Jeffery, Placemakers, 814 Solano Avenue, Albany, CA 94706.

APRIL 1994

Last Chance for Awards Nominations

Northern Section planners and projects worthy of professional recognition must be nominated by April 15, 1994. Submittal information packets are available from the Awards Program Coordinator, Wayne Goldberg. Award winners will be acknowledged at the Northern Section awards banquet, tentatively scheduled for June 24th, 1994. Local winners also will be sent on to compete for state-wide and, possibly, national awards. Last year five Northern Section individuals and programs received Cal Chapter awards.

To obtain a complete listing of the award categories and application materials, please write or call:

Wayne Goldberg
Comm. Develop. Dept.
100 Santa Rosa Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95402.
Phone: 707/543-3220.
Fax: 543-3218.

IN MEMORIAM

Donald McGaffin, a planner at Santa Clara County, died Thursday, March 24. The Northern Section offers our condolences to his family and colleagues.

COMMENTARY

How Sustainable Is Our Planning?

by Robert Odland, AICP

A new family of terms is appearing more frequently in planning: sustainable development, sustainable cities, and sustainable growth. What do these terms mean and what are the implications for planners? The concept of sustainability and sustainable development came into the public debate with the publication of the World Commission on Environment and Development report, *Our Common Future*, (often known as the Brundtland Report). This report defined sustainable development as the ability to meet the needs of the current population without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

As a more precise definition of sustainability is evolving, I believe some key features are becoming clear. Sustainability involves systematic approaches to building a sense of community, preserving natural resources, preventing pollution, ensuring environmental fairness, and minimizing the use of non-renewable resources. A common response of planners is that this is what planning has been attempting to do.

However, sustainability has several important characteristics that planning has not always possessed: it has significant public support among non-planners, its support cuts across professions, it provides a focus for planning efforts, it recognizes the interrelationships between systems, and it has an overall goal (albeit poorly defined). A common misconception is that sustainability is synonymous with self-sufficiency; on the contrary, sustainability must recognize the interconnections between different levels of societal structures.

Some advocates of sustainability focus their attention on cities. In 1990 the First International Ecocity Conference was held in Berkeley, sponsored by Urban Ecology, a Bay Area non-profit organization. This was soon followed by the First Los Angeles Ecological Cities Conference which resulted in the publication of the book, *Sustainable Cities*, available through the APA Planners Bookstore. In November 1993, the Conference on Creating Sustainability Across America, held in Fairfax, Virginia, and Washington, D.C., had a very strong focus on communities.

Vice President Gore's book, *Earth in the Balance*, addressed many of the general issues of sustainability. Within the past year, the President's Council on Sustainable Development has been organized to develop recommendations for incorporating sustainability into the federal government. Also, various groups have been formed to implement Agenda 21, a comprehensive blueprint for sustainable development that was adopted at the recent UNCED Conference in Rio de Janeiro (the "Earth Summit").

Several projects in the Bay Area, such as planning for the Presidio, have dealt with sustainability. Soon, the East Bay Conversion and Reinvestment Commission, established to manage a federal pilot program on base closures and redefinitions at national laboratories in Alameda County, will be looking at how to incorporate sustainability into the military reuse process. Urban Ecology has received several grants which will enable it to begin preparing a *Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area*.

The National APA Conference in April will feature several sessions on sustainability. The highlight will be an address by Jaime Lerner, former Mayor of Curitiba, Brazil, on Monday morning. Mr. Lerner, an architect and urban planner, has been recognized by the United Nations Environment Programme and many other organizations for his work in making radical changes in Curitiba's transportation, land use, open space, sanitation, and solid waste systems.

On Monday afternoon, I will be moderating a panel on "Sustainability and Growth" that will feature Professor Jonathan Barnett, who recently published an article in *Architectural Record* on sustainability and growth management; Richard Tustian, who is with the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy; and Mary Tucker from the City of San Jose, who has been active in sustainability issues at local and regional levels.

The Preliminary Program lists several other sessions that deal with sustainability: "Global Sustainability" on Sunday morning, "Sustainable Communities" on Sunday afternoon, and "Sustainable Rural Communities" on Tuesday morning. Other sessions, such as ones on "Environmental Inequities" and "Planning with Diverse Populations" cover topics central to the concept of sustainability. In addition, one of the Breakfast Round Tables on Tuesday morning will focus on sustainable development. Why not take this opportunity to tune up your sustainable planning skills?

Robert Odland is a Senior Associate with Sedway Cooke Associates and a Board member of Urban Ecology, a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the concepts of ecological cities.