Sustainable Construction Workshop

This workshop is part of the 1996 Annual Conference of the California Resource Recovery Association (CRA) and will be held June 16-18, 1996 next to beautiful southern California beaches in Newport Beach. The theme for this year’s CRA Conference is “The Next Wave: Achieving 50% Diversification and Sustainability”.

The workshop will highlight:

• Developer/Owner Requirements for Sustainable Designs
• Costs, Spocs, & Building Codes for Reused/Recycled Building Materials
• Market Ready and Emerging Reused/Recycled Building Materials
• Reducing, Reusing, & Recycling Waste in Design and Construction

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To Register:
(916) 452-0268
For more information:
(916) 652-4450

Chapter Office Open until 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, June 25
4:00 p.m. - AIA/LA Executive Committee @ Chapter Office
5:30 p.m. - AIA/LA Board Meeting @ Chapter Office
6:00 p.m. - Interior Architecture Committee*

Wednesday, June 26
5:00 p.m. - International Practice Committee*
6:00 p.m. - "On the Boards, C"
Peer-Run @ RTKL

Thursday, June 27
6:00 p.m. - "How to Build Your Own Website* Hangout @ Chapter Office

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A letter to the editor of a newspaper commenting on the success of the Yale GOP at winning a state election, expressing concern for minority students and the impact of affirmative action programs on the economy and society.

Affirmative Action: Based on an Incorrect American Economic Parable

Now that you belong to the Exeter Yale GOP club, that's not going to bother me greatly, as we are, it is not your children who get bored out of South Boston into Roxbury, it is not their brothers who lose contracts because of minority set-asides, it is not the school of Yale and Harvard who apply to become FIB agents and construction workers and civil servants and cops, who bear the brunt of this reverse discrimination. It is the sons of middle America who pay the price of reverse discrimination advanced by the Walker's Point Group. I wonder if their constituents at other people's expense. If I am elected, my friends, I will go through this administration, department by department, I will met the members of the whole racial structure, to reverse discriminate, get back in and build America.

- Patrick J. Buchanan, GOP Presidential Candidate, in the 1992 Annual Conservative Political Action Conference February 21, 1992

Affirmative action has become the hot button issue for 1996. Although, presidential hopeful Patrick J. Buchanan said his usu-
A Cacophony or a Chorus?

There is a backslash, across the country and especially within California, which threatens to undo the advances won by the proponents of affirmative action.

Michael Woo in his inspired keynote address to the AIA National Diversity Conference last year provided many thoughtful insights into the issues and value of diversity within our profession and society. His conclusion, after considerable reflection on his part, is that "we cannot compromise on this issue." Mr. Woo goes on to explain, "That is, we can't satisfy the goal of opening up the doors of opportunity to people who have been excluded while at the same time appearing those who don't want either the heavy hand of government or any other heavy hand to force contractors or governments or others who have money and control to change their way of doing business."

Senator Dole, originally in favor of affirmative action, last year writing for the Los Angeles Times criticized those "purveyors of preferences...who view every social problem through a racial prism." Quoting Patrick J. McDonnell's recent piece in the L.A. Times, Dole "now says such programs are divisive and have outlived their usefulness."

Affirmative action took another body blow this past June. Writing on this issue, construction attorney Daniel Corner, of the firm Crawford Bangs, described the United States Supreme Court as ruling that "the affirmative action regulations were not, per se, constitutional because the state was ordering contractors and subcontractors to conform to the most rigid and minute scrutiny to be valid."

This country has been often referred to as an ongoing experiment, an attempt at crafting a framework so that we can live our lives according to a few core principles. We have learned, not without a price, that we can live in a society where a variety of viewpoints can co-exist as long as they do not directly conflict. Legislating liberty, as provided for in the laws of our land, demands constant vigilance. Legislating opportunity is even more difficult.

Letters to the Editor

Affirmative Action appears to be on its way out, thanks to the Supreme Court's Adarand Decision. I should have seen it coming. The MBE/WBE's should have been aware. Unfortunately, I'm on the wrong side of the decision.

For the past five years, half of our work has been in the public sector. We were up in our ears in affirmative action: badly thought, we found that our MBE/WBE/WBB contractors were usually costlier when compared to others on our private work. We were developing good, professional relationships that could be used on the public side. Had they learned the more expensive way of doing work, the paperwork and numerous other formalities required in the public sector? Analysis paralysis is expensive. So, unfortunately, we've rarely been able to hire a DBE consultant on a public job when bidding was required.

Sometimes, in order to get the numbers just right, we came up short. The consultant couldn't perform. We were selecting consultants, perhaps, for the wrong reasons. Quality should have been the first criteria, not location or personal connections. As an architect, if the consultant can't deliver, we have to make up for the shortcomings - sometimes with considerable embarrassment. On one occasion, good, solid mentoring made the difference. Cost us a bit of money, but we both felt the rewards.

The white, male-owned firms, in a way, also had a "level playing field". We all had to meet a minimum level of "disadvantaged business" (DBE) participation for public work. If there were only a few Disabled Veteran Business Enterprises (DVBE's) - min. 3% were required by the State) in the region, so be it. But, with such small numbers to choose from, competition was on it's way out the window. And, how could anyone have meaningful participation at a 3% level? And there are other anomalies - like one MBE engineer had been in business twice as long as us and was three times our size. Some of us grumbled about the unfairness of the system and the rigidity of projecting on a public job. If you haven't completed the affirmative action part of a State, MTA or City of Pasadena WBE, you've failed. It's a good reason to leave the profession or hire a marketing consultant. It can be 90% of the RFP.

But wait. I'm writing to tell you I believe in Affirmative Action. Well, sort of. It's not perfect. Why didn't we do an organization (AIA) work to improve the system? Maybe we've all been too busy trying to survive to worry about how to improve another government regulation. Why didn't those that benefited most directly, work to improve the imperfections? The MBE's, the WBE's and the DVBE's.

I believe in the power of diversity. Most of us believe the broader our experience base, the better our decisions. My wife will tell you, "if only he listened..." And my self-employed, small business oriented would say, "analysis paralysis will never get you there. Use your instincts." That's just gender and age diversity. Throw in ethnicity and culture. Now you're cooking. And that's why I believe in working with diversity.

The benefits of a diverse team should be better projects. Better projects improve our reputations, profitability and (hopefully) make the next job easier to get. The price will be palatable and a commitment to mentoring.

Keep the faith.

Lance Bird, AIA Regional Director, AIA/LA Immediate Past President, Lance is a principal with La Canada Design Group, a 16-person, white, male-owned architectural practice in Pasadena.

Editor's note: See "President's Message" in the June and October 1995 issues of LA Architect for additional writings from Lance Bird on this topic.

Although I dislike addressing complex issues with easy slogans, President Clinton is perhaps the voice of reason in this case with his sound bite suggestion of "mend it, don't end it." Affirmative action has benefited a great number of people. It needs fine tuning like all the documents and decisions that make up the fabric of American democracy. To keep affirmative action as strong and intact, it must be resilient enough to adapt if it is to be an on going vehicle of change. To take a position of "no compromise," certainly an ever popular strategy in our halls of government, I fear will result in the same kind of intran- sigence. The policy needs work. This will necessitate compromise. To deny this is to court its demise.

It seems to me that the goal of implementing an affirmative action policy should be to make such a policy unnecessary. To do otherwise is to institutionalize the state of being disadvantaged.

There is a by-product of this timely debate of which we, as a profession and as participants in the construction industry, should be mindful. The fragmentation of what were formerly our common interests had reduced our influence as a whole, rather than a united voice speaking for the design and construction community we have the discordant sounds of numerous competing opinions.

We would be well served to remember that public policies that assist us in our method of practice and our industry as a whole, should be supported by all the various constituencies that currently make up the building community. Our strength is our role in an industry, when, taken together, contributes more to the economy than any other single component. We must foster a consensus viewpoint as to what is best for all those involved rather than being distracted by how this work is to be distributed. If government policies do not support sound, thoughtful and creative investment in the public sector, there will be little about which to debate.
The 1995 Chapter Annual report is available for review at the Chapter Office. In addition to the customary financial reports, the organization, committees, office relocation and awards are featured.

Competitions
Chapter Initiates Interior Architecture and Design Awards Program
AIA/LA has initiated the Interior Architecture and Design Awards to promote professional and public awareness of current outstanding interior architecture and design. Eligible projects must have been completed between January 1, 1992 and May 15, 1996. Projects can be completed between January 1, 1992 and May 15, 1996. Projects can be received in the AIA/LA Chapter office by 5:00 PM, Friday, May 31, 1996. The application deadline is May 24, 1996.

Greenport Waterfront Park Design Competition 1996
The waterfront village of Greenport in Long Island new york is sponsoring a competition to propose creative and innovative design ideas for a 4-acre park and harborwalk. The landscape will incorporate various architectural pavilions, a carousel, facilities and dock master's office. $50,000 in total prizes will be awarded, and entrants need not be licensed in New York. For information and registration contact the Greenport Waterfront Park Competition at 516.477.1000.

ARE Seminars
The 1996 Architectural Registration Seminars continue this month with the following scheduled sessions:
May 18: Div. B: Site Design
May 25: Div. C: Building Mock Exam
June 1: Div. B: Site Mock Exam
June 8: Div. B: Site Mock Review
June 8: Div. C: Building Mock Review

The seminars will continue through June. For a complete listing of the schedule and for information regarding registration, fees and locations of all seminars, call the Chapter office at 310/785-1809.

Culver City: East Washington Plan
AIA/LA wrote in support of the East Washington Plan, designed by Sussman/Prejza & Co. together with Campbell & Campbell. Letters addressed to the City Council and the Redevelopment Agency were read during the public hearing. The City Council approved the next phase of the project, while some portions await an RFP process. The designers consider the results of AIA/LA efforts a success.

City of Los Angeles: MGD 110
The Board of Building and Safety Commissioners have drafted an amendment to the Los Angeles Municipal Code To Adopt Emergency Provisions Pertaining To Structural Observation. On February 20, 1996 the Commission approved the ordinance and allowed it to proceed towards final approval and implementation. The amendment is called Memorandum of General Distribution No. 110, Structural Observation. MGD 110 for short.

CITY WATCH
Los Angeles: MGD 110
The Board of Building and Safety Commissioners have drafted an amendment to the Los Angeles Municipal Code To Adopt Emergency Provisions Pertaining To Structural Observation. On February 20, 1996 the Commission approved the ordinance and allowed it to proceed towards final approval and implementation. The amendment is called Memorandum of General Distribution No. 110, Structural Observation. MGD 110 for short.

The spirit and intent of the proposed code change is simply that the architect or engineer of MH buildings be responsible for the safety and integrity of the structure to conduct structural observations during the course of construction at critical phases of the project. Good ideal. However the language of the proposed amendment makes for considerable unnecessary risks and exposure on the part of architects and engineers and in no way addresses the role and responsibilities of the building contractor.

In short, this proposed change to the code will dramatically alter how we practice within the City of Los Angeles. More troubling is the fact that the Commission thought it proper to proceed with a task force made up of representatives from The Department of Building and Safety and the Structural Engineer’s Association of Southern California, with no representatives from the architectural profession. To remove the AIA from the process is quite indefensible. Request that the provision of MGD 110 be delayed. This would be the right thing to do for your practice.

City Watch promises to be a regular feature focusing on events and issues upon which AIA/LA is taking a position. It is also meant as a sounding board for concerns regarding local governing agency policies that affect our practices and the built environment. This is the place to make your voice heard, your concerns known and to share your experiences. Material is encouraged from all members of the Chapter. Speak up, speak out — MH
American Bungalow Style
Text by Robert Winter, Photographs by Alexander Vertikoff (Simon & Schuster, $40 tc)
A food backward glance to a popular building type of a century ago that's enjoying renewed popularity. There's no denying the appeal of these woody, Craftsman houses, with their spreading eaves, enveloping interiors and integration of the container and the contained. The text is brief but apposite, the images enticing. —Michael Webb

Barragan: the Complete Works
(Princeton Architectural Press/Chronicle Books, $60 tc)
A comprehensive survey of the dozen familiar masterworks and over a hundred other buildings and projects, with essays, plans and elaborate documentation. One's admiration for the Mexican master is enhanced by this thoughtful, handsome study that fills in so many gaps. —M.W.

Ten Houses by Gwathmey Siegel; Ten Houses by Peter Zumthor
(Forbes & Associates, $75 each)
Having written the first Access guide to Las Vegas and two editions of Los Angeles, I should probably excuse myself from California. This walking tour is worth making the obvious points that (a) Wurman's concept of an annotated entries arranged by proximity is inspired and (b) the guides ultimately depend on the quality of the writing and the timeliness of the editing. I've recently visited Miami, which was a year out of date when it appeared and told me nothing I didn't already know. Las Vegas, which was uneven but led to many discoveries. In May, I'm off to Europe with the indispensable Paris and London guides. Why can't the publisher find writers like that here? —M.W.

Events Around Town
"Architecture: East + West, Ted Tokio Tenaka, FMA" through December 31, 1996

Dr. Robert Pierson Dies
Dr. Robert Pierson, professor, and tour guide extraordinaire, died on March 26, 1996, of complications from AIDS. He was 41.
Bob Pierson was a "local boy," raised in Arcadia, California. Although he loved to travel, and did so extensively, he always had a special affection for Southern California. He never complained and thanked all involved were satisfied with the conclusion. Bob was always honest and direct, but never harshful. No matter what his personal feelings or difficulties, he always took time to listen to others. Even at the end of his illness, he never complained and thanked his caregivers for performing even small tasks.

As an educator of the highest standards, Bob Pierson's death is a tremendous loss. As a friend, he is irreplaceable.

The program was sponsored by the Society of Architectural Historians, of which Bob was a Board member. He became ill shortly after we completed the Wilshire Walks.

Bob had an often wicked sense of humor, loved to play practical jokes, and was the master of bad puns. A brilliant man, but never afraid to show a sense of humor about even the most frustrating issues, what sometimes looked like a casual attitude belied the seriousness of his approach. He was able to lighten a stressful moment without losing sight of the goal. He was always thinking up new ideas for books, tours, programs, and events; there was never enough time to do it all.

Bob Pierson was a man of the highest integrity, sensitivity, and insight. His outgoing and friendly nature and his egalitarian attitude attracted a wide range of admirers and co-opted even those who opposed him. He had a way of bringing people together, taking special effort to make everyone feel at ease and necessary to any proceedings. In meetings he strove always to reach "consensus," so that all involved were satisfied with the conclusion. Bob was always honest and direct, but never harshful. No matter what his personal feelings or difficulties, he always took time to listen to others. Even at the end of his illness, he never complained and thanked his caregivers for performing even small tasks.

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A Chapel For the Southland

What must have been the best kept secret in the architecture community is finally out! Construction of SkyRose Chapel at Rose Hills Memorial Park is well underway. The latest entry from the award winning Arkansas based architecture team of Fay Jones and Maurice Jennings will be their largest chapel to date! Probably best known for their Thornochrome Chapel in Arkansas, the serenity and grandeur of which created so much stir, the architects were called in to build a second structure to house the overflow traffic. This chapel will mark their first construction outside of a 50 mile radius of their office, which many years ago would not accept commissions from clients outside their own state.

Fay Jones and Jennings were considered a natural for the commission after Bruce Lasenber, the company’s engineer, showed Dennis C. Poulsen, President of the Rose Hills Company, a photograph of the Thornochrome Chapel in Smithsonian magazine.

Jones and Jennings were considered a natural for the commission after Bruce Lasenber, the company’s engineer, showed Dennis C. Poulsen, President of the Rose Hills Company, a photograph of the Thornochrome Chapel in Smithsonian magazine.

Fay Jones continues his tradition of translating gothic church imagery into a contemporary language which transforms the enormous 28,000 sq. ft. structure into a delicate, graceful landmark despite its size. The structure is exposed within the chapel proper and takes on a basket weave appearance, not unlike the firm’s other signature chapels. As a foil to its Gothic roots, the structure actually becomes heaviest at its top. However, even when adapting to California’s rigorous earthquake standards, the chapel is filled with natural light including a 24’ x 72’ ridge skylight. Maurice Jennings is quick to point out the team is also responsible for designing lighting fixtures, as well as other features within the chapel.

AIA/LA West Side Home Tour

The Los Angeles Chapter of the AIA invites you to explore the best of contemporary residential architecture in Brentwood, Pacific Palisades, and Venice on Sunday, June 7 at the AIA/LA West Side Home Tour. This tour will follow up to the much talked about (and sold-out) Malibu Home Tour held earlier this month. The tour features projects by award-winning AIA members including Steve Ehrlich, FAIA, Ted Tokio Tanaka, FAIA, Trevor Abramson Architects, Lorcan O’Herhy, AIA, and Rockefeller Hircak Architects.

Ticket prices are $25, general admission, $20 AIA members and students. Advance ticket purchases are required. No tickets will be sold the day of the tour. Tickets are expected to sell out.) Mail checks payable to “AIA/LA”, 5687 Melrose Ave., Suite M3, Los Angeles, CA 90069. Credit card orders can be made by calling the Chapter Office at 310/785-1809.

A/E/C Systems ‘96

The Seventeenth International Computer Technology Show for the Design and Construction Industry will be held at the Anaheim Convention Center June 17-20. More than 25,000 design and construction professionals are expected to attend the more than 150 conference sessions and the 475-vendor booth exhibits. Visit the AIA/LA at their very own booth!

Scoop!

A bright beam of southern California sunshine shone through the overcast skies at the 1996 AIA National Convention and Expo96 in Minneapolis May 10-13. Ronald A. Alton, FAIA (AIA/LA) was elected National Vice President/President-Elect along with Brian Doughtery, FAIA (AIA/OC) who was elected National Secretary. The Young Architect’s Award went to Christopher Coe, AIA (AIA/LA). Of the 91 architects elected to the prestigious College of Fellows, more than 16%, or 15 architects, were from California alone! (See LA Architect, April 1996-p.1 for names of the four Los Angeles Chapter winners.) Several Los Angeles area architects received top design awards. A full report of the Convention and Awards will follow next month.