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# NORTHERN NEWS

## SEVEN PROJECTS RECEIVE SECTION AWARDS

Seven projects were honored with Northern Section Awards at the 1991 Annual Awards Dinner on June 28. The event drew about 75 people to the UC Berkeley Faculty Club and featured an evening happy hour, dinner, and dual projector slide show highlighting the winning projects. The slide show was accompanied by (drum roll, please) the announcement of the winners, acceptance speeches, and brief presentations by the awards recipients.

Santa Cruz County scored big, taking two of the seven awards. The Soquel Village Plan was selected as the year's outstanding Comprehensive Planning Project and the County's Stream Care Guide and Restoration Program was named the year's outstanding Specific Planning Project. The City of San Mateo received an Honorable Mention Award for its Comprehensive Plan, and the City of Arcata's "State of the City" report received an Honorable Mention Award in the Specific Plan category. The city of Vacaville received this year's Media Award for its General Plan public outreach program, while Palo Alto received Honorable Mention for its Site Development Regulation Study. Finally, William Spangle Associates received an Honorable Mention for their study of unreinforced masonry buildings in Los Angeles.

Presenting the awards were Chair Wayne Goldberg and committee members Lia Sullivan and John Davis. Other committee members were Carol Whitmire and Jim Olmstead. The evening included a farewell address from Ann Millican, whose term as Section Director expired in June, and a welcome address from Don Steiger, who will be stepping into Ann's position.

The winning projects will now compete with projects from the State's seven other Sections for the State Planning awards. State award winners will move on to the National competition later this year.

Each of Northern Section's award recipients will be profiled in the October, 1991 issue of Northern News. Congratulations again to the winners!



*The results of this year's election are in!*

### STEIGER ELECTED NEW SECTION DIRECTOR

Congratulations to Don Steiger, who was elected to take Ann Millican's place when her term expires this month. Don is looking forward to fulfilling the responsibilities of Section Director and hopes to continue the Section's emphasis on professional development activities, social functions, and advocacy for legislation which furthers the role of planning in shaping the future of Northern California. He is well qualified for the task ahead of him, having served on the Board as Legislative Liaison since 1989.

The Northern Section Board looks forward to Don's leadership, and to Ann's assistance as Past Section Director.

## FROM THE FAR NORTH

*by Lia Sullivan, AICP*

Section Director Ann Millican drew a crowd of Far North Planners for a Brown Bag Lunch in Eureka on June 14. In spite of a last minute location change, 26 planners turned out to hear Ann discuss "what APA can do for local planners."

Planners came from five of Humboldt County's seven cities, the County Planning Department, CalTrans, Humboldt State University, and Crescent City. Crescent City's two planners received a round of applause for driving down from Del Norte County.

While many of the Far North planners were APA members, most had little exposure to our organization. Ann described the APA and the services it provides to members. There was a good laugh all around when discussing the origins of APA: "Let's see, there was the ACPI...and the ASPO...and then the ACPI became AIP...and then they all became APA...," to which one planner added, "that's when ASAP started too!" (Well, maybe you had to be there.)

*(Continued on page 3)*

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## Steve's Seven Steps to Superior Service

by Steve Matarazzo

**1 Always Remember That You're Not Working For Sears.** Unlike your most recent shopping trip where the sales person was rude, convincing you you'd never shop in that store again, we work for government where the client has no other option but to accept service from us. It's not as if he/she, after being treated poorly, would pack up and move to Santa Clara County where all employees are mellow, having been immersed in Japanese management techniques since the invention of the microchip.

**2 Sometimes It's Okay To Give In To A Little Paranoia.** That resident behind the counter that you were abrupt with because you were generally having one of the worst days of your life may be a Supervisor's brother-in-law, or worse, may run for Supervisor and win in the next election. Most people relate to "waking up on the wrong side of the bed."

**3 When The Heat Rises, Counter-Attack.** They say that one of the world's biggest lies is, "We're from government and we're here to help." Many people believe the fallacy of that saying and come to the office door from time to time to give you a piece of their mind. One of the best ways to de-fuse the potential explosiveness of that situation is to get away from your side of the counter and sit with them on the public side, or even in a conference room to discuss the problem at hand. This provides a psychological signal to the complainant that you are not necessarily on the other side of the issue.

**4 Walk A Mile In My Shoes.** Most people just want to be treated the same way that you would want to be treated. One of the most sobering experiences I had regarded service over-the-counter at a County Planning Department that shall remain nameless. After working 14 years in the public sector, I spent one year testing the consultant waters where it was necessary for me, on occasion, to go to the zoning counter to get information. I was treated very coldly — my first experience with proverbial faceless (heartless?) bureaucrats. Look in the mirror, what do you see? Do you see anything at all?

**5 Get Your Sheet Together.** If someone leaves a message for you, especially the press, don't call them back immediately. Take a few minutes to jot down some notes on a sheet of paper regarding the information requested or how additional information can be obtained. Give a little extra if you have the time.

**6 Try And Avoid The "Bureaucratic Shuffle."** Time permitting, if you get a phone call that should be going to someone else, try and get the answer for the caller so they don't have to keep calling until they get the "right person." This can often avoid the following chain of events: caller phones right person — right person on vacation, leaves taped message to call another person — caller calls the other person, person is out for early lunch — caller calls after lunch — other person says



that's not my job, call my supervisor — caller calls supervisor, supervisor apologizes for not knowing anything about anything, and so it goes.

### **7 Become Accustomed to the Fact that Nobody Likes a Planner.**

The best we can hope for is benign indifference from the public. We say "no" alot, in many different ways. That's our job. If you want friends, join a club. If you want to be effective in public relations, admit to a disgruntled person that the reason you are saying no has nothing to do with whether you or he/she is a nice person. It's because you are from government and are here to help. While the word "help" in this context may be confusing for some, it does mean that you are here to: (1) help explain regulations relating to public policy, (2) help preserve and enhance the natural and built environment through the regulations and plans you administer, and (3) help process permits in keeping with sound land use, housing, transportation, and environmental policy. Hopefully, you can get some kind of psychic reward from that.



## **From the Far North** *(continued from page 1)*

Discussion included how Far North planners could be involved with APA events without driving winding roads for more than six hours. Suggestions included videotaping events for collective viewing at Far North events, using telecommunication and teleconferencing, and even miniconferences designed to entice Bay Area and other planners to come north. Another idea was to make the Section Director's visit an annual event.

Discussion also included AICP and the certification process. Far North planners who are AICP members have offered to conduct exam preparation workshops for local planners; Ann and I both attested to how helpful these could be. Workshops held in Humboldt County could also serve planners in Trinity, Del Norte, and Mendocino Counties who wish to take the AICP exam.

The recently graduated planning technician I work with summed up Ann's presentation, *"I never really understood what a professional organization was all about - they certainly don't give you any clue in college about what these organizations do for planners. The meeting was informative in explaining this role and convinced me to join at some point."*

Other events for the day included an evening reception at Arcata's Lady Anne Bed and Breakfast Inn. While the turnout was smaller than at lunch, the reception offered a fine chance to relax and "talk shop." Planners, perched on antique chairs and settees, gathered 'round the hors d'oeuvres and got up "close and personal." My favorite story was about one planner's experience driving a street sweeper from Wisconsin to Canby, Oregon. This story served as a reminder and example that in small towns, a planner does a little bit of everything.

The next meeting will be "Yet Another Brown Bag Lunch for Planners"; Friday, August 16, at noon in the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District Office, 828 Seventh Street, Eureka (a bring-your-own-lunch event). The meeting's topic will be "sharing information and discussion of planning on the North Coast."



# LETTUCE ENTERTAIN YOU

By Bob "Broccoli" Brown

Having just returned from the Fifth Annual California Planners' Salad Bar Awards, I thought it would be good to share my thoughts on some of this year's entries (entrees).

There are generally three categories judged at these events. The first are conceptual designs consisting of unique arrangements of the various elements not previously thought of or put into practice. The second consists of plans anticipating what might be found at salad bars in the next ten to fifteen year period. The third category consists of actual constructed projects, and these have always been my favorite part of the contest.

Looking at the entries in this year's event, I tried to visualize what types of planners had submitted each project and came up with the following generalizations.

Rural planners usually submitted a plate of intermixed greens with "cottage" cheese, whereas in comparison, urban planners had either no greens or, used their greens (s)parsley. The environmental planners usually submitted projects that, when viewed from the side, could be seen to have distinct layers. Wetland planners generally had low-lying mushy salads with Thousand Island dressing.

Open space advocates usually had green salads covered in ranch dressing and submitted their projects sealed with handi-wrap. Those in favor of growth management generally had very little room left on their plates, but had a greater emphasis on filling the interior spaces. The neo-traditionalists could be singled out because they generally started with greens in the center branching out to other components. Advocacy planners had few common greens in their salads and tended to pick the under-represented components such as miniature corn cobs and gooseberries. Planners involved in historic preservation brought back the same salad they had submitted in years past, whereas urban renewal planners presented projects that appeared to be the result of a second go-round at the salad bar.

I was particularly intrigued by one project which consisted of a very tall salad consisting of an ample supply of every ingredient available. I thought that this salad would have been submitted by a proponent of complete communities in high rise buildings. I was surprisingly amused to learn that the submittal came instead from a surviving planning student (so much for generalizations).

As usual, there were many high-quality projects submitted, including several from Northern Section. However, I am sure there could be more projects that could be submitted from this area.

So when you next find yourself in front of a salad bar, think about the project you could start planning. And remember, you are what you eat (or is it, you eat what you plan?)

*Bob Broccoli, "AISP", manages an environmental consulting firm in Eureka.*

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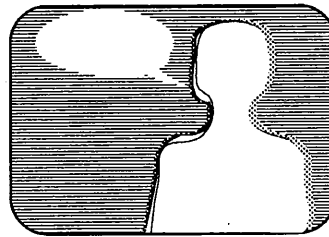
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## PLANNERS ON THE TUBE - PART TWO

by Wendy Cosin

In response to Chuck Myer's article about fictional "Planners on the Tube," it seems appropriate to let newsletter readers know about Pacifica's real life planners on the tube. Titled "Warm Up to Planning - The Pre-Game Show," a pre-taped half-hour planning talk show precedes the Planning Commission meetings which are broadcast live over local cable TV two times per month. Two planners host each show where current and advanced planning topics are discussed. Interviews are also frequently included; our most recent guests were endangered San Francisco garter snakes and their herpetologist caretaker. Other topics have included previewing items on the agenda, recycling, open space, the role of the Planning Commission, historic preservation, redevelopment, and growth control.

Pulling the shows together has been more difficult than we expected. The usual presentation of staff reports and responses to questions at live meetings is much less pressured than producing and starring in a regular show. The first few shows were particularly rough, and the ever-changing volunteer camera operators and directors add an air of uncertainty. If anyone has bootleg copies of the first show, I would pay a lot of money to keep it from ever being seen again.



We would like to lighten it up by doing a spoof of "Car Talk" or "At the Movies." Just imagine the dialogue:

### *Boston Accent:*

"Welcome to 'Plan Talk.' So, you bought a lot in the Sliding Hills subdivision. Are you nuts? You invested good money in Sliding Hills? Forget development. Invest your money in an Edsel next time."

### *Chicago Accent:*

"This week on 'At the Planning Commission Meeting' we will be reviewing the Big Bucks Brothers latest development proposal. I have to say I'm disappointed in the project. I have seen the proponent's work before and other projects have been better articulated, the direction has been more clear, and the overall production more satisfactory. As for the Planning Commission's performance, it seemed very stilted. I had high hopes for the project, but I have to give it a thumb's down."

While we are perfecting our accents, we will keep muddling through in our current roles. The project has been fun and seems to be a good way to make planning ideas more accessible to the public.



# Planlines

by Chuck Myer, AICP

## ODE TO AN ODOR

In my neck of the woods, it's harvest time. I'm talking garlic. Year number 13 for the Garlic Festival. My favorite weekend. Although other towns are also trying to use their biggest agricultural products to put themselves on the map, Gilroy is (in my humble, unbiased opinion) the most successful.

Virtually every city seems to have a claim to fame these days, and many are banking on the resurgence of a popular interest in agricultural productivity. Garlic Festival organizers were used as consultants for the start-up of the Morgan Hill Mushroom Mardi Gras, and other towns send representatives to the Garlic Festival hoping to emulate its success.

California now hosts a fruit basket of annual fairs and festivals, ranging from **A**(rtichokes in Castroville) to **Z**(ucchini in Hayward). The Castroville event has been around for over a quarter century, while others are "cropping up" for the first time this year. Indio has a Date Festival, Holtville a Carrot Festival, and Patterson an Apricot Fiesta. Courtland claims a Pear Fair. El Centro boasts a lettuce ball. Lodi celebrates its grapes, while citizens in Selma dry their grapes and claim the title as raisin capital. Shafter couldn't decide and settled on a Potato and Cotton Festival. Santa Paula and Cloverdale run the gamut with Citrus Festivals. And like Gilroy, Vacaville plugs its nose and holds out an odiferous economic symbol, the onion. Stockton has an asparagus festival. No comment.

The right to claim to be a fruit or vegetable capital of the world is never cut and dried (pardon the expression). Pumpkin festivals are held in both Half Moon Bay and Manteca. Carlsbad and Fort Bragg challenge Morgan Hill's mushrooms with festivals of their own. Watsonville and Los Gatos both celebrate their strawberries. La Habra and Coachella both trumpet their corn. And each summer, blackberry lovers can sample their favorite fruit at festivals in Westhaven, Trinidad, or Covelo.

In addition, literally dozens of shows highlight California's ninth biggest crop: fresh flowers. Daffodils are displayed in Fortuna, lilacs in Palmdale, begonias in Capitola, orange blossoms in Lindsay, irises in Ukiah, fuschias and rhododendrons in Eureka, camellias in Sacramento, Atwater, Temple City...the list goes on.

Still, Gilroy stands out on the list. Our magnificent festival, like the veggie it celebrates, is unique among all the rest. Not even Avila Beach's Plankton Festival can hope to capture the aroma of our big weekend. Even the big garlic producers of Europe now accept our obvious superiority as they line up for the chance to be our sister city.

Ah, such a beauteous bulb. It moves me to poetry...

*The mushroom fairs in three different towns rank Morgan Hill too low  
With Carlsbad and Fort Bragg too, there isn't much room to grow  
Watsonville flaunts its strawberries and doesn't care if they're teeny  
Hayward hosts a festival to show off its zucchini  
Kingsburg's fair is littered and pocked with watermelon seeds  
While the town of Avila Beach each year on plankton feeds  
Residents of Indio suck on dates while they siesta  
And up the road in Patterson there's an Apricot Fiesta  
The Pear Fair reigns in Courtland town, while Coachella trumpets corn  
And over the hill in Castroville the artichoke fest was born  
Ol' Manteca and Half Moon Bay have pumpkins the size of Bunyan  
Holtville consumes its carrot crop and Vacaville sucks on onion  
But where on earth do thousands flock just following their nose  
To inhale calamari and smell the stinking rose?  
Journalists and hawkers are flying in in droves  
And Penthouse waits with baited breath for Miss Garlic to shed her cloves  
Yes garlic reigns in Gilroy town as we celebrate its bounty  
So everyone come and smell our herb, even y'all from Fresno County!*

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*1991 State Conference*

## **"On the Edge"**

**October 20-23, 1991**

**Sacramento Convention Center**

*Sacramento, California*



In case you hadn't heard yet, the 1991 Annual Conference, "*On the Edge*," sponsored by Cal Chapter and Sacramento Valley Section, will be held October 20-23, 1991 at the Sacramento Convention Center.

**Don't miss it!**

### **NORTHERN NEWS**

EDITORIAL OFFICE  
3871 Piedmont Avenue., Suite 205  
Oakland, CA 94611

