

NORTHERN NEWS

A Publication of the Northern Section, California Chapter, American Planning Association

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MAGNITUDE 20.4!

Three Earthquakes in 16 hours
(7.1 + 6.6 + 6.7 = 20.4)

by Michael Sweeney

Saturday, April 25, 1992, was the first day of the Best of the West Festival and downtown Ferndale was in its full glory. Brightly-colored, historic storefronts reflected the bright morning sunlight which had attracted many out-of-towners as well as locals to the opening event - a horse parade complete with kids and ponies.

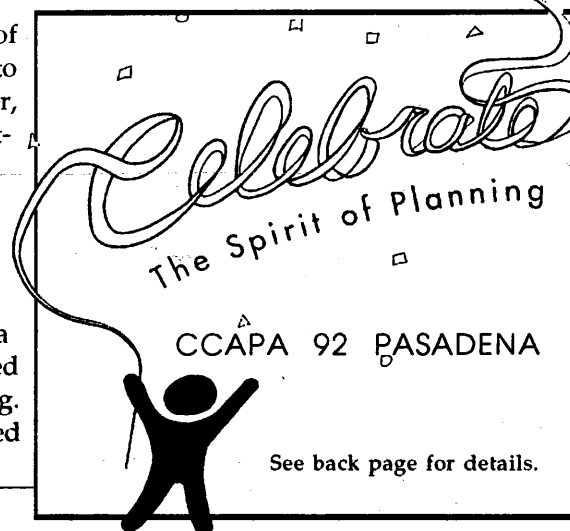
At 11:06 AM, the Victorian Village of Ferndale (population 1,321) began to shake violently. Twenty seconds later, Main Street was filled with frightened and screaming people, shattered glass, and dust and brick from a collapsed unreinforced masonry parapet. The most serious injuries included a man whose legs were broken by falling brick and a storekeeper who was severely bruised when a large cabinet fell on her leg. Two cars were crushed by a collapsed

brick wall. The surrounding neighborhood of historic houses was similarly devastated. Over two dozen homes were thrown off their foundations and many others lost front porches and chimneys. Amazingly, no one was killed!

Sunday morning, April 26, two more quakes rattled the town at 12:41 AM and 4:18 AM. Houses that survived, but were obviously weakened by the first quake, went down during numbers two or three. More chimneys cracked or collapsed. According to the State Office of Emergency Services (OES), over 60 houses suffered major damage, as well as 51 public buildings and businesses. The sewage treatment plant, library, elementary and high schools and several bridges were also damaged.

Initially, response to the quake was in the hands of law enforcement staff who closed Fern Bridge over Eel River to allow only residents and emergency people through, preventing a flood of would-be looters and curiosity seekers. The City Council quickly set forth guidelines for stabilizing damaged structures at an emergency meeting held the following Monday, but reminded people

(continued on page 4)



Planners Need a Customer Orientation

by Bruce McClendon

Planners need to understand that effective planning depends on providing needed and useful products and services to their customers. Many public sector planners display a disturbing reluctance to regard the people they are planning with, or for, as customers. They don't even feel comfortable using the word customer. Why is this so? One planner told me that referring to people as customers would cheapen and demean his professionalism. He argued "We're not Wal Mart" and he was right. That company is much more successful and much more effective at serving its customers than are most planners.

Public planners need a wake-up call. Costis Toregas, President of Public Technology Inc., stated "Customers are the dominant driving force in the private sector and 'the customer' must become the primary focus and dominant driving force in government." The goal of every planner should be to treat everyone like a customer and to provide them with

quality products and services that are needed and valued. By focusing on the marketplace and emphasizing customer service, planners can establish credibility, respect, influence, and increased effectiveness.

Managing for customer service requires a total organizational commitment. At all levels the organization must have visible values, principles, attitudes, and philosophies that reflect a complete and unflinching commitment to customer service. The following are examples of some of the principles which I think are essential requirements for effective customer service:

- The first step every organization must take if it wants to be successful is to decide "What business are we in?", or at least "What business do we want the customer to think we are in?" Successful service providers know the answer to this question and communicate it to their customers and employees.

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DIRECTOR'S CORNER

by Don Steiger

WHAT IF...

- People were always in when a planner needed to see them...
- The people you really needed to talk to always wanted to listen...
- The people who want to talk to you have important things to share...
- You were never put on hold...
- Your meeting calendar was easy to manage...
- Planners were well paid and respected...
- A new planner came on board and handled your "nightmare" project well...
- The new computer and programs worked perfectly...
- Budgets were completed a month before the close of the fiscal year...
- Your boss said "Great job, take a few days off if you like"...
- You were already relaxing at home by now...
- You had a few moments each day to ponder...

What If?



RFP REFERENCE BINDER AVAILABLE!!

In response to numerous requests for the handouts used at the highly successful workshop on "RFPs: How to Improve the Process", Cal-Chapter is making available for sale a binder containing such useful information as:

- A Primer on "Selecting a Professional Consultant and Administration of the RFP"
- Boilerplate Letters for RFQs and RFPs
- Examples of Standard Contracts
- Sample Evaluation Criteria for Consultant Selection Interviews
- Sample Procedures Used by Public Agencies

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APA Influence Felt in New Transportation Act

by Karen Finucan
APA/Washington Office

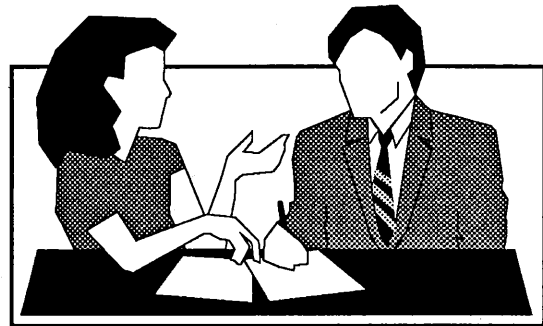
The role of the Surface Transportation Policy Project (STPP) and its component groups, including APA, in developing and ensuring passage of the new Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA, "Ice Tea") was applauded recently by Andrew H. Card, the new Secretary of Transportation. Meeting in late March with George Marcou, AICP (APA Deputy Executive Director) and staff from four other public interest groups, Card acknowledged APA's work on the project as part of the reason for the legislation's passage.

The Secretary said he supports many of the APA-backed provisions, such as increased flexibility for localities in deciding which modes of transportation to fund. Card also indicated that he was aware that for ISTEA to work, some changes must occur in the way MPOs (metropolitan planning organizations) and the states work and interact. Card expected the Department of Transportation (DOT) to release draft regulations to implement ISTEA early this summer. A former planning commissioner from Holbrook, Mass., Card said he would welcome APA's comments.

The meeting with Secretary Card was just one of several transportation-related events that APA was involved with in March. APA also played a prominent role in ISTEA: New

Perspectives, New Partnerships, New Programs – a two-day symposium sponsored by STPP and the AIA. Marcou moderated a panel – New Partnerships in Planning – which included APA members Gloria Jeff (Michigan DOT), Tad Widby (Chair of APA's Transportation Division), and Kevin Heanue (FHWA). APA member Tony Kane (also with FHWA) participated in a session entitled "ISTEA: Basics of the Act." The conference was co-developed by the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the American Public Transit Association (APTA), and USDOT.

APA member Leon S. Eplan (Commissioner of Planning and Development, Atlanta, Georgia) will serve on the National Commission on Intermodal Transportation, having been named to the Commission by US Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell (D-Maine) on March 5th. ISTEA established the 11-member Commission to "determine the status of intermodal transportation, the problems that exist...and the resources needed to enhance intermodal transportation." Their report is due September 30, 1993.



GIS APPLICATIONS IN PLANNING

Northern Section to Co-Sponsor Half-Day Presentation with BAAMA

On September 24th the APA Northern Section and the Bay Area Automated Mapping Association (BAAMA) will jointly sponsor a presentation on the applications of GIS technology in the planning process. Representatives from several local agencies will describe their use of Geographic Information Systems, how they have improved their operations, and what it takes to implement such systems. GIS consultant, Bruce Joffe, and U.C. Professor John Landis will provide an industry-wide overview of applications and implementation methodology.

The presentation is free to APA and BAAMA members. It will be held from 9 AM to Noon, at the Berkeley Yacht

Club, located at the foot of University Avenue in Berkeley.

BAAMA is a non-profit professional association dedicated to providing information concerning the advancement of spatial information systems to meet public sector needs. This educational forum about GIS and related technologies has been ongoing since 1983. BAAMA is a section of the Tri-West chapter of URISA, the Urban and Regional Information Systems Association, and meets bi-monthly.

For more information, contact: Ruel Brown at (510) 670-5558, or Bruce Joffe, AICP, at (510) 246-8080.



.....QUAKES

(Continued from page 1)

that building permits would be necessary for any reconstruction activity. Within hours, OES inspectors canvassed the area posting inspection notices on each and every building. Main Street was closed to all but clean-up crews and vehicles. The California Conservation Corps was put to work directing traffic and assisting people in removing their belongings from seriously damaged structures. In this small community, people helped each other, providing emotional support as well as temporary lodging.

Within a week, state and federal emergency procedures began to complicate the process of recovery. Ferndale is a State Historic Landmark with over 150 structures defined as contributing to the historic character, including several on the National Register. In addition to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and State OES procedures, the town was faced with State Historic Preservation requirements. Considerable confusion resulted, especially over the issue of demolition. Historic buildings deemed an "imminent threat" were condemned by the City Engineer, but reimbursement of demolition costs depended on following the established procedure. Unfortunately, the procedure was not clear and, depending on which agency was contacted, somewhat contradictory. Finally, two buildings were demolished within the 30-day emergency period before many of the historic procedures took effect.

Other planning-related recovery issues pertain to reconstruction. Building permit fees are being waived to encourage people to get permits and rebuild according to current building codes. Houses on post and pier foundations which collapsed are being jacked up and placed (and bolted) onto perimeter foundations. Chimney inspections have been emphasized in a town with lots of wood-heated homes, and damaged chimneys are coming down to be replaced with insulated pipe. Downtown storefronts are being reinforced with plywood shear walls and restored to their original historic character with expedited design review.

My own experience is a testament to preparedness. Being a new-comer and not acclimated to the frequent but previously small earthquakes in the area, I spent \$6,000 reinforcing my home's foundation two summers ago. Without a doubt, my house would have gone down if I had not done this. Similarly, the already earthquake-shortened chimney was capped and completed with a pipe extension. Large pieces of furniture and the water heater were bolted to the wall and remained standing. Damage this time was limited to a few broken flower pots and plates that fell from shelves.

I now have set aside a 4-day supply of food and water, a flashlight at each end of the house, a radio with extra batteries, and fuel for a camp stove. Ferndale is well on its way to recovery with the motto "It could have been worse." Planning for such disasters remains mostly a matter of being prepared before the fact. I now feel prepared physically, if not psychologically.

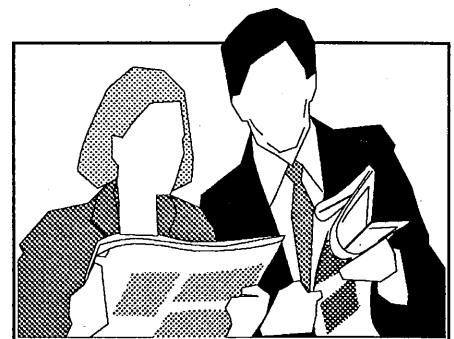
Michael Sweeney is the City Planner for the City of Ferndale



JOBS IN PLANNING

Senior Planner - CITY OF PALO ALTO (\$3393 - \$4491 / month, plus benefits)
 New position with emphasis on affordable housing. Knowledge of CDBG and other state and federal programs desired. Requires five years of experience and a Bachelor's degree in Planning or related field. **SUBMIT RESUME TO:** City of Palo Alto, Jeanine Martin, Human Resources Department, P.O. Box 10250, 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, CA 94303. Applicants may also fax resumes to Jeanine Martin at (415) 239-2696.

Assistant/Associate Planner - CITY OF SARATOGA (Assistant - \$2935 - \$3746 / month; Associate - \$3308 - \$4221 / month, plus benefits and 7% City-paid PERS) Current and advanced planning in a residential community, with extensive public contact. Level of appointment depends on experience. Assistant level requires one year of professional experience; Associate level requires four years of professional experience. Both positions require Bachelor's degree in Planning or related field. Master's degree in Planning can be substituted for one year of experience. **APPLY BY:** Friday, July 31, 1992. Resumes not accepted without City application form. **APPLY AT:** City of Saratoga, 13777 Fruitvale Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070. For application, call (408) 867-3438.



Planners Need Customer Orientation (continued from page 1)

- The next step is to constantly monitor, evaluate and measure your performance from the perspective of your customers. What gets measured gets done and there is no substitute for direct customer involvement in evaluating services and performance.
- The foundation of effective planning should be based on marketing and customer service, not mandatory planning legislation. Planners do not own their customers or their jobs. Planning should not be crammed down the throats of an uncaring and unsupportive public. It should be earned by providing superior service.
- The planner's role is not to create and impose a vision on the community but rather to help the public find it. People don't want to hear about the planner's vision, they want to become involved in developing it themselves.
- The solution to the revenue problem for planners is not higher taxes and more subsidies, it is better marketing. It is marketing that develops significant political constituencies from among the targeted beneficiaries of products and services.
- In any service business, people are the most important asset. One thing many planners have failed to learn is that many of their assignments and responsibilities require more social skills than technical skills. The successful service provider recognizes the importance of personal contact, especially at certain critical moments in the service delivery process.
- Selecting and hiring employees is a critical step in developing a customer service orientation. It is much easier to hire planners that are naturally service-oriented than it is to try to change someone's personality and attitude. Seek individuals with solid technical knowledge who are naturally excited about, and enjoy, practicing planning and serving people.
- Attitudes of employees successful in high-contact situations include flexibility, tolerance for ambiguity, the ability to monitor and change behavior during the service encounter, and empathy for customers. Advocates need to be able to substitute emotion and enthusiasm for objectivity.
- Accountable front-line professional planners with specialized knowledge must be expected to practice with an absolute minimum of direct supervision. Devolution of authority is critical. Workers at the lowest levels must be empowered to act responsively and quickly to provide effective services to their customers.

Successful planning programs will be those that make the customer the primary focus of everything they do. They will be customer-driven and they will use understanding of their customers to develop and deliver satisfying products and services. They will manage for moments of truth and each employee will be understanding, respectful and aware of the importance of having a personal service strategy and of meeting or exceeding customer expectations during each and every encounter. By listening to their customers and responding to the needs of the marketplace they will contribute to the development of an effective planning program and to a more effective profession.

*Bruce McClendon is the Planning Director of Fort Worth, Texas, former APA President (1984-85), and author of the new book **Customer Service in Local Government; Challenges for Planners and City Managers**, published by APA's Planners Press.*

Successful planning programs will be those that make the customer the primary focus of everything they do.

Planlines

by Chuck Myer, AICP

LONG LIVE CAPTAIN NITWIT

California State Historical Landmark #939 is a pile of junk.

That's not just what the neighbors think, or what developers are saying so that they can tear it down.

That's what its "architect" says, too.

NitWit Ridge, the treasure trove of Cambria, may be the world's longest standing house made of found materials (i.e. junk). We're talking cement, plaster, half-quart aluminum cans of Busch beer, abalone shells, axles, windshield wipers, rusting pipewrenches, bathtubs, old television sets, tire rims, toilet seats, hubcaps, driftwood planks, mud and sticks. But these cosmic cast-offs have been molded together into an organic, evolving human habitat that mixes aesthetic beauty, humor, and repulsion into one visual statement.

Also known as "lunatic lodge" or "The house that humor built," NitWit Ridge is the indescribable domicile of Art Beal, Captain NitWit himself. The structure climbs nine levels up the side of a 250-foot cliff. Surrounding the structure are organic gardens with fruit trees, fuchsias and towering sequoias.

Beal collected junk and hauled rock for William Randolph Hearst during the building of "Casa Grande" in San Simeon (now known as Hearst Castle). The Hearst reject pile ended up becoming building materials for Beal's own house which he began building in 1928. It is, in fact, an "anti-Hearst Castle," an architectural satire which retains its pungency in the fact that it is built out of WRH's cast-offs. (Ironically, Hearst Castle and NitWit Ridge are San Luis Obispo County's only two registered landmarks.)

Tucked away behind the trees on a hill above "Skunk Hollow" in West Cambria Pines, this unique abode is protected by humorous signs, such as "DO NOT FEED THE ANIMALS," which is posted under a full scale cement deer.


Beal, half Klamath Indian and half "mountain man," was orphaned by the 1906 earthquake. He escaped from a parochial school as a teenager, and made his living as a dishwasher, cook, garbage collector and merchant marine. He became a champion long-distance swimmer, as well as a poet, contortionist and vaudeville comedian. He swam with Johnny Weismuller and worked for Linus Pauling, as well as Hearst.

But most of his life has been spent on the ridge, alone with his two "old ladies" (Mother Earth and Dame Nature) and a steady stream of puzzled visitors and enchanted children. His fame has spread, leading to appearances on "Real People," "Today" and "PM Magazine."

He was taken from his creation a few years ago when his health started to fail. A plaque went up, and efforts were mobilized for the structure's preservation (State assistance was impossible when Beal was "in residence"). Still lucid at 96, Captain NitWit now holds court in a nursing home in Morro Bay, while the curious puzzle that was his home is still standing.

Students from nearby Cal Poly San Luis Obispo's School of Architecture frequently flock to the site, and during Beal's heyday even MIT students made the pilgrimage. Now locals, preservationists, historians and citizens are banding together to finance the preservation of Art Beal's masterpiece. (Those interested can send contributions to or request information from the Art Beal Foundation, P.O. Box 571, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406.)

The lesson for city planners rings clearly: The house has survived three-quarters of a century on an eroding 50% slope. While building his castle bare-handed and bare-footed with only a pick and a shovel, this architectural scavenger somehow made a pact with nature in creating his folk art masterpiece. And as nearby half-million dollar homes slide down into Skunk Hollow, you can hear the wicked laugh of an old nitwit echoing through the trees...



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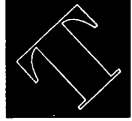
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APA

Celebrate the Spirit of Planning This Fall in Pasadena

The 1992 CalChapter APA Conference will be held this year from November 7 through 10 in Pasadena. The Conference Committee has been working diligently to put together a fun, exciting, and interesting conference.

The Conference will capitalize on its Pasadena location by highlighting local planning activities and sharing experiences from the region and State. Panel discussions will cover a variety of land use, environmental, housing, ethnic diversity, transportation and development-related issues. More than 40 sessions have already been scheduled, covering such topics as:

- **Empowering Residential and Commercial Groups**
- **Promoting and Managing Movie-Making in Your Community**
- **Planning for Military Base Closures**
- **The Dark Side of Municipal Incorporation**
- **Creative Responses to Providing Affordable Housing**
- **Forgotten Women in the City**
- **Different Modes for Different Folks**
- **Private Development of Downtown Public Open Spaces**
- **How State Law Killed Planning**
- **GIS: Useful Tool or Vendor Hype?**

Sound interesting? There will also be mobile workshops showcasing the diversity of the Los Angeles area, the rich history of Pasadena, and other points of interest in the area. Management issues will be addressed in a half-day workshop with Paul Zucker, who has conducted management audits of planning agencies throughout California. Plans for many other panels and workshops are still being finalized.

We hope you can join us in Celebrating the Spirit of Planning and meeting the challenges of the 1990's. Watch for registration information in upcoming issues of *California Planner*.

NORTHERN NEWS

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