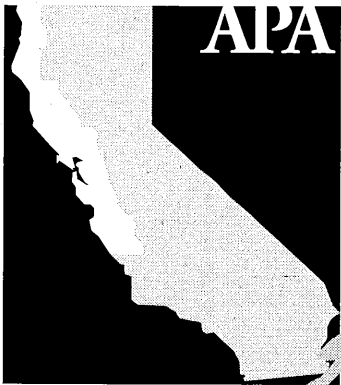


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Northern News

NORTHERN SECTION, CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION

Computers and Planning

by Vivian Khan, AICP

DECEMBER 1995
JANUARY 1996

RECEIVED
DEC 15 1995
DUNCAN & JONES

NSCCAPA Holiday Party

This year's APA Northern Section Holiday Party will be held at the Camron-Stanford House, on the shores of Lake Merritt in Oakland. Northern Section CCAPA has rented the house for the evening of Thursday, December 14 and will be holding the holiday party there between 6:00 and 9:00 PM. For more information, please see the Event pull-out page inside.



As an admitted technological illiterate (i.e. someone who still can't figure out how to program the VCR), it's really hard to see myself as a cyberpunk or computer junkie. Nevertheless, ever since the city where I used to work went on-line a few years back, hardly a workday has gone by that I don't log on. Now that I'm a home-based planning consultant, I've found on-line service even more useful and have, fortunately (or not considering the addictive aspects of this practice) had more time to "surf the Net." You'll never convince me that a computer on the counter can replace a qualified and pleasant planning professional. Moreover, the rule of GIGO still applies (i.e. the quality of the information you get out of a computer is only as good as what goes in). Nevertheless, it's clear that planners and planning agencies can not afford to ignore the possibilities of this new way to exchange and retrieve information.

Most public agencies now have some kind of computer-based information system. All of the staff in the planning department, for example, may have access to information about applications and census data, the finance department has computerized budget information, the police department has crime statistics, etc. The computers in each of these departments are usually connected directly to one another by some type of cable that allows department members to have access to the same information and, sometimes, to one another. This kind of linkage is called a local area network or LAN. A wide area network (WAN) is created by connecting two or more of these groups of computers together, usually via telephone lines. The WAN allows communication or electronic mail (E-mail) and access to information resources among the groups of computer users in the WAN. More importantly, once your computer is part of a WAN it can be connected to the outside world or, as the nerd would say, another node on the Net.

The Internet is a worldwide group of information resources composed of about a million computers that are mostly wired together locally and then connected to some sort of hub or server that is, in turn, connected to other servers. Another way to describe the Internet is a network of networks—some academic, some military, some commercial, and all interconnected. The Internet began as a military tool, grew to include a variety of colleges and universities, and, since the early 1990's, has expanded exponentially with the availability of commercial servers like America On Line (AOL) and Compuserve.

All you need to access the Net is a computer, a phone, and a modem. If you'd like to take an exploratory trip before subscribing to a service that offers an Internet gateway, check out the free services provided by a number of public or university libraries. Once you're on the Net, you can send or receive messages and exchange digital data with anyone else anywhere who is on the Internet. You can also access unimaginably vast quantities of data stored on computers throughout the world.

E-mail users can send messages directly to other users at their individualized E-mail address or communicate via computerized mailing lists, discussion groups, newsgroups, or message boards with scores of other folks with common interests. (My address is uncharacteristically literal—viviankahn@aol.com. Most are far more creative—kvetcher, silly putty, netdog, Major Tom—or some version of initials or name—nevets, lmort, quastler, etc.) The last three letters identify the users affiliation or domain (e.g. com for commercial, edu for educational institutions, gov for government).

Some of these groups are limited to paid subscribers. You have to be an AOL subscriber to access the Planners message center in a special section called PLACES (Plan-

(continued on page 4)

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DIRECTORS COLUMN

by Wendy Cosin, AICP

Twenty Northern Section Board members spent a sunny Saturday at our annual retreat discussing ideas for the future of the Section and APA. The day was facilitated by Candice Pava who led us through a series of envisioning and prioritization exercises.

We began by identifying what we saw as the strengths of the organization. Consistent with information received during membership forums several years ago, the newsletter and events for networking, information exchange, and social interaction were recognized as important. APA members were also identified as our most valuable resource — both in terms of our numbers and the available pool of talent.

Next, we brainstormed about where we would like the Section to go and what we would like to accomplish as a Board. Although a long list of ideas was created, we were able to identify five major categories where, in addition to the ongoing services that the Section provides, we would like to put additional energy. Each of the five categories — political action/advocacy, increasing participation, sponsoring joint events/networking on a grander scale, improving the image of planning and planners, and increasing student support — is described in more detail in the Bulletin Board of this newsletter.

The Board recognized that last year's reorganization has successfully involved more people in Board and Section activities, but that additional outreach continues to be needed.

The Board wants to provide events that are valuable enough for people to attend and services that get members further involved in Section activities. The role of planners as leaders, important voices, forces to be reckoned with, teachers, healers, and activists, was of interest and will continue to be discussed.

Hope to see you at the Holiday Party on December 14 — it has historically been our most popular social event and promises to be a lot of fun again this year. ☀

BULLETIN BOARD

on the move...

Bob Odland is now with the Urban Institute as the on-site manager in St. Petersburg, Russia of a project to develop a new land use planning and regulatory system for the City. From November, 1994, to September, 1995, he had worked in St. Petersburg and Nizhny Novgorod, Russia, for PADCO, Inc.

Bob is the former Legislative Liaison for the Northern Section.

1997 State Conference Preview

This will be the first, but not the last, of information on the 1997 State APA Conference to be hosted by Northern Section. In the next few months, we will form a committee to begin to pull it all together. We need to have a location and theme decided prior to the 1996 Palm Springs conference. As many of our local members discovered during last year's National Conference in San Francisco, working on conferences is very rewarding — it stretches you into new roles, offers the opportunity to make new connections, and there is great satisfaction with success.

Please let any of the Board members know if you would like to get involved early in the planning process. Also, if you have ideas about location (remember we stretch from Monterey to the northern border of the State) or theme, let us know via telephone or e-mail.

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Deadline for submitting articles, news, artwork, advertising and other materials for inclusion in the Northern News is the 16th day of the month prior to publication.

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For membership, subscription information and changes of address please contact:

Membership Department
APA National Hqtrs.
1313 East 60th Street
Chicago, IL 60637
312/955-9100

PLANNING SERVICES/ DATA BASES

The following are planning related services and/or databases that can be accessed on the information superhighway. For an even bigger list, you can contact Mark Rhoades, Northern News Editor.

ABAG- <http://www.abag.ca.gov>

ISOCARP (International Society City and Regional Planners)

The Homepage of the International Society of City and Regional Planners (ISOCARP) has moved slightly* to a higher level directory. It is now available from a simpler address: <http://www.soc.titech.ac.jp/isocarp>

California Planner- <http://www.rain.org/~calapa/home.html>

California Planning Roundtable- <http://vfrontiers.com/~vfrnters/cpr.html>

AOL - PLACES- Type keyword (GO) PLACES to get there

Internet- cd4urban, contact listproc@u.washington.edu (community development)

h-urban, contact uicvm.bitnet or uicvm.uic.edu (urban history)

ruraldev, contact ksumv.bitnet or ksumv.ksu.edu (rural economic development)

Greenbelt Alliance- E-mail: lorman@ix.netcom.com

URL- <http://www.greenbelt.org/gba>

University of Washington- <http://www.caup.washington.edu/>

BULLETIN BOARD

NSCCAPA Board Retreat

The following topics were discussed by the Board at the annual retreat that was held on November 4. The Board was divided into workgroups at the end of the day to discuss specific topics, as listed below. These topics constitute the culmination of discussion that was held through the course of the day, and represent some of the direction that the Board will be pursuing for the coming year.

Political Action/Advocacy

The Board recognized that planning is being threatened nationally by takings challenges and other legislation; statewide and local support are not as strong as in the past. While the State and National organization provide lobbying efforts, opportunities for activism include publication of legislative alerts in the newsletter and encouraging members to write letters to legislators, newspapers, and magazines in support of good planning. On a local level, the Board could combat bad press by sponsoring workshops and encouraging attendance by Planning Commissioners, City Councils, and members of the press. As an action item, the Board decided to consider taking action on local issues, to be considered on a case by case basis, especially support for plans that represent strong and positive planning efforts.

Increasing Participation in APA

Some of the reasons and benefits that were identified for participating in APA include: Jobs and contacts for future employment; Increasing personal income through greater professional knowledge and credential programs; Peer recognition; Continuing education opportunities that are less expensive than university extension programs; Greater participation by managers because professional participation is a respected and expected activity; Common interests support provided by special focus committees; and, A greater stress on professionalism because the organization provides a framework for a "profession," as opposed to planning just being considered a "job."

Events

In addition to continuing the events currently offered by NSCCAPA and expanding our collaborative efforts to sponsor more joint events with AIA, ASLA, SPUR, and AEP, the following strategies were recommended to strengthen

and expand events programming: Student Events - develop a student program for an evening event and possibly a workshop or symposium on campus for a half-day Saturday session. This program would be developed with student input and participation. Topics would be developed by the students; Faculty Involvement - develop programs that will encourage faculty members from Bay Area universities to participate as guest speakers and panelists. Provide a forum for faculty to present the results of their research on planning topics; and, Speakers Bureau - provide speakers on planning issues to speak before planning commissions, city councils, board of supervisors, community groups, chambers of commerce, realtors, developers, builders, and environmental groups.

Public Education-Image of Planning

This group discussed methods for educating the public about planning issues, and how to enhance the image of planning. Ideas include: establishing a speakers bureau for speaking to City Councils, Planning Commissions, and other groups with a video or slide presentation prepared to accompany the presentations; seminars on specific planning issues targeted to decision makers; and, providing the media with a list of planners that could be contacted to comment on planning related topics.

Student Support

The Board recognizes that students are both a resource for new information and ideas, and the future relevant to the profession. Ideas for increasing student support by the NSCCAPA include: an outreach program with planners making university presentations, and RAC positions for student liaisons; revamping and modernizing the student membership packet; expanding on-line resources; and, instituting a mentoring program.



The Bulletin Board section of the Northern News is intended to provide a forum for individuals to provide the membership with information about events or current topics. If you would like to submit an item for the Bulletin Board section, contact the Newsletter Editor at 510/ 227-3214.

ning, Landscape, Architecture, Construction, Engineering, Specifications). But there are a lot of other groups that are open to anyone who has E-mail access.

I get most of my planning information from a group called CD4URBAN originating at the University of Washington. The primary focus of this list is urban community development. A typical discussion starts with a request for information (e.g. a Canadian planner looking for suggestions on standards for defining urban service areas) that is sent to all subscribers by simply using the list address. Depending upon the level of interest in a particular topic, discussions can go on for days and involve transmission of communications ranging from a word or two to lengthy documents. Relatively brief text files can be attached to messages. (An animated discussion about the work and ideas of neo-traditionalist architect Chris Alexander has gone on for a couple of months.) Long documents (e.g. the entire zoning ordinance for Benbow, Texas) can be transmitted and stored in a computerized library (the technical term is "uploaded") for retrieval ("downloading") by those with interest in the subject.

I also subscribe to a forum sponsored by the Washington State APA Chapter that focuses on planning issues in the Evergreen State. Right after the polls closed on Election Day, I sent an E-

mail to waplanet@futureinfo.com and to a few other Seattle-area users to find out about the vote on Referendum 48, the takings measure. The next time I logged on, most of my E-mail was messages of jubilation about the defeat of this anti-planning legislation. In the days since then, discussions about the implications of this issue have continued since we uploaded a file containing an APA paper on takings. Waplanet subscribers also receive agendas and minutes for meetings of a land use study commission appointed by Washington's governor.

The APA California Chapter has a mail list that was started last summer by a small group of central coast planners involved in the technology track at the State Conference. The Cal Chapter Board has voted to fund an on-line service that will include enhancement of this discussion group as well as expansion of the Chapter's home page on the World Wide Web. Texas and Oregon are among the other chapters with mail lists and Web sites. Although a handful of APA's national staffers have E-mail addresses, the national organization has lagged far behind the state chapters and is not likely to be on-line until sometime in 1996. Like most national organizations, APA has spent a lot of time and probably too much money thinking about what to do while more and more planning information gets transmitted among the

agencies and individuals who are already on-line.

Aside from E-mail, the Internet's greatest value and the main reason most folks use it, is as an information source—the mother of all libraries. Resources that may be of use to planning professionals range from census data, Federal grant information, bibliographies, community development project summaries, land use regulations, and planning articles to items as esoteric as a worldwide guide to open air markets. The hard part is finding out what's in the library and where it's located. There are several systems to help with this task including Archie (from "archive"), Gopher (a double pun named for the University of Minnesota mascot), Veronica (source obvious), and Jughead (ditto). These tools, developed mostly by academic computer centers, search for data using menus and keywords.

The World Wide Web is another system that was developed to find data on related topics that have already been linked together. Perhaps the best indication of the tremendous growth in planning material available electronically is the number of Web sites devoted to planning and planning related issues. Web sites provide links to access other data. The links are provided through a feature called hypertext—highlighted or underlined words that can be clicked on to access other documents or data. In mid-1993 there were fewer than

100 sites on the WWW. According to one estimate there are now at least 48,000 worldwide and the number is doubling every 109 days.

If you know the site name, you can go directly to a Web site and then follow the links. If you don't have a name, you can use one of the commercially available browsers such as Netscape or one of the free Web sites that catalog other Web sites. All you need to do is enter a key word (e.g. planning) and, theoretically, you'll find what you want. Yahoo (<http://www.yahoo.com/>) is considered to be the easiest directory to use. The APA California Chapter started developing a Web site before the State conference and a growing number of government agencies now have sites that list services and offer information such as meeting agendas. (See ABAG's site at <http://www.abag.ca.gov/> for a list of Bay area jurisdictions on the Web). My informal list of planning and community development sites has close to 30 addresses and continues to grow. I haven't yet visited all of them, but it's nice to know that all that information is out there when I want to find it.

The lists on page 5 identify just a few of the planning resources available to anyone with Internet access.

(continued on page 5)

Vivian Khan is a Principal with Kahn/Mortimer Associates, located in Oakland.



It's Holiday Party Time Again!

Camron-Stanford House is back by popular demand

This year's APA Northern Section Holiday Party will be held at the Camron-Stanford House, on the shores of Lake Merritt in Oakland. The 14-room mansion was the site of our very popular 1992 Holiday Party and provides a picturesque setting for the annual festivities. The Camron-Stanford House was built in 1876 and is one of the last of the great Victorian homes in the Lake Merritt area.

answer questions about the house. For those who wish to enjoy twilight over Lake Merritt, the veranda and lawn areas will also be open.

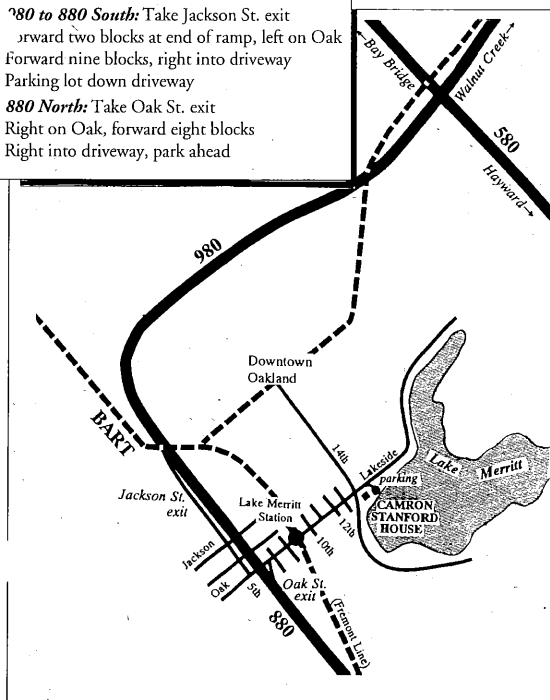
The Holiday Party is traditionally one of the year's most enjoyable Section events. It's a great opportunity to meet other planning professionals, chat with friends after work, and enjoy good food and drink in a beautiful, historic setting. Our caterers are promising a great spread of hors d'oeuvres and snacks. It's an event you won't want to miss!

Please register early for this event! The cost of the party is \$10.00 if you pay by December 1, \$12.50 if you pay by December 12, and \$15 at the door. Student admission is \$7.50 if paid in advance. To attend the party, clip the registration form below and mail your check to the address shown. You can also phone in your reservations by calling (510) 845-2404. However, checks must be received before the deadline dates.

The Camron Stanford House is located at 14th and Lakeside, five blocks north of the Lake Merritt BART Station (see map at left). Parking is available on the premises.

Northern Section CCAPA has rented the house for the evening of Thursday, December 14 and will be holding the holiday party there between 6:00 and 9:00 PM. The event will feature food, drink, music, and merriment, not to mention an opportunity to browse the home's historic exhibits and period furnishings. Museum exhibits chronicle the history of the house and describe the evolution of Oakland's neighborhoods during the past century. A volunteer docent will be on hand to

880 to 880 South: Take Jackson St. exit forward two blocks at end of ramp, left on Oak Forward nine blocks, right into driveway Parking lot down driveway
880 North: Take Oak St. exit Right on Oak, forward eight blocks Right into driveway, park ahead



YES! I would like to attend the Holiday Party on December 14 at the Camron-Stanford House. Enclosed is my check for \$ _____ for the following individuals:

Please enclose \$10 per guest for early registration (by December 1); \$12.50 for registration thereafter. Student registration is \$7.50.

Please mail to: APA Holiday Party c/o Barry Miller • 817 Alvarado Road • Berkeley, CA 94705



The Bay Trail: Developing a Multi-Use Trails System Around the Bay

Brian Wiese, AICP, Trail Development Coordinator with ABAG and Steve Fiala, Trails Specialist with EBRPD, will give a presentation on the Bay Trail, a network of multi-use pathways circling San Francisco and San Pablo Bays. The route encompasses about 400 miles through all nine Bay Area counties and is about 40% complete. The presentation will include an overview of the extent of trails built in the 9 counties, trail projects in the pipeline, future trail projects, and the identification of constraints to trail development. EBRPD's trails program will be featured.

Date: January 17, 1996
Time: 5:30 - 6:00 p.m. networking,
wine and cheese;
6:00 - 7:30 p.m. presentation
Location: AIA Office, 130 Sutter Street,
6th Floor, San Francisco
Cost: \$7 regular, \$5 students
BART: Montgomery Station
Parking: Sutter/Stockton Garage
RSVP: NSCCAPA Voicemail
415/281-0195



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COMMENTARY

More Applehood: Putting It All Together

Over the last couple of months we have examined why suburbs may not be good places to live and some of the methods that can be used to improve the quality of life for residents. Applehood is the notion of evolving existing neighborhoods and homes into a more complete and hospitable way of life, one that provides a sense of place, community and continuity to families and one that takes advantage of both proven design principles and neighborhood organization to achieve this goal. Why do existing older neighborhoods get left behind in the desire to plan and develop new areas on the urban edge until they reach a level of disrepair that demands a significant level of investment? Perhaps because the present planning paradigm is such to concentrate only on new projects where traditional zoning and subdivision ordinances apply.

A paradigm change embodies both fear and opportunity-fear of what is not known but also opportunity to address a problem long ignored. Can we as a profession and a larger society continue to ignore the literally thousands of square

miles of older post war neighborhoods? We believe the answer is "no." Steps need to be identified in the near future to avoid more severe problems as the new century arrives. On a more positive note, fostering a sense of community in older areas will make fuller, richer lives for existing residents and residents looking for a good place to live.

To summarize, the Applehood concept includes the following components: Re-establishing a sense of community in older suburban areas; Working closely with neighborhood residents in a cooperative fashion; Identification of physical improvements which can be taken to foster a feeling of community; and, Developing a social framework within neighborhoods to ensure that the benefits of Applehood are continued into the future.

Applehood Group principals are Byron Ely, Rebecca Clark, Don Henry and Jerry Haag.

The Commentary section of the newsletter is intended to provide a forum for members to express their views relative to planning related topics, or to express an opinion relative to articles printed in this newsletter. If you would like to submit an article, contact the Newsletter Editor at 510/ 227-3214.

(continued from page 4)

Planning-Related Discussion Groups

Subscribe to any of these groups by sending an e-mail message to the subscription address and typing the following as the message: Subscribe <name of list> your name (e.g. subscribe cd4urban viviankahn@aol.com).

| Name | Subscription Address | Type |
|--------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| cd4urban | listproc@uwashington.edu | Urban community development |
| ced-net | listserv@majordomo@sfu.ca | Community economic development |
| ecocity | searn.sunet.se | Sustainable urban development |
| interplan bulletin | interplan@aol.com | APA International Div. |
| urban-l | listserv@trearn.bitnet | Urban planning |
| ruraldev | listserv@ksuvmr.dsu.edu | Rural planning and development |
| waplanet | majordomo@futureinfo.com | Washington State planning |

Planning-Related Web Sites

| | |
|--|---|
| UC Berkeley Planning Library | http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/ENV1/cityweb.html |
| Citizen Planners Resource Center | http://www.webcom.com/~pcj/welcome.html |
| Institute of Urban and Reg. Dev. | http://www.ced.berkeley.edu/urd |
| Planning & Architecture Internet Resource Center | http://www.arch.buffalo.edu/pairc/ |
| HUD program information | http://www.hud.gov/ |

The Current Planner's Blues



by Scott Whyte, AICP
City of Walnut Creek

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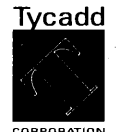
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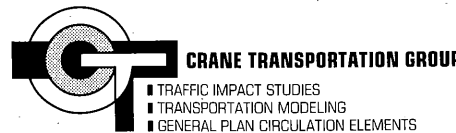
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December

14 NSCCAPA Holiday Party

DECEMBER

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
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| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |

January

17 The Bay Trail

JANUARY

| S | M | T | W | T | F | S |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
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