



NORTHERN NEWS



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California Chapter
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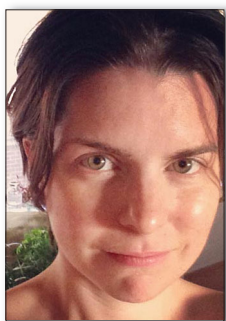
A Publication of the Northern Section of the California Chapter of APA

DECEMBER 2014/JANUARY 2015



10 Great Novels every urbanist should read

By Anna Clark, *Next City*



Read all the reports you want. Catch up on headlines. Notch the classics in the literature of cities — Jane Jacobs, Thomas J. Sugrue, and all the rest. There will still be something missing.

In the best fiction, writers convey a kind of truth about cities that can't solely be captured in true stories. This

list gets beyond the usual suspects — *The Jungle*, *Dubliners* — and shines a spotlight on 10 riveting novels and story collections that the urban enthusiast may have missed. With ferocity, humor, and intelligence, these books can be counted on to reveal the lived experience in the urban landscape with uncommon power — illuminating both the failures and the possibilities of city planning.

The Dollmaker by Harriette Arnow

Featured city: Detroit

“Our most unpretentious American masterpiece,” Joyce Carol Oates called it. A finalist for the National Book Award, this 1954 novel is set a decade earlier, when a Kentucky family migrates to Detroit for work in an auto factory that now supplies military equipment. Gertie Nevels struggles to turn scanty factory housing into a home for her children and her husband in a city that marks them as “hillbillies.” From crowded public schools to the roving police presence, from debt as a way of life to green space sacrificed for industry, *The Dollmaker* is an unnervingly empathetic portrayal of the daily battles of survival in the city. Arnow’s portrayal of a crowded Detroit alley features an extraordinary ensemble cast, where diverse characters — children too — must choose whether or not to fight for their individualism in a place that values the exact opposite.

My Brilliant Friend by Elena Ferrante, translated by Ann Goldstein

Featured city: Naples

Opening in post-war Naples, a city of astonishing scarcity, we follow Elena Greco into the late 1950s. Greco, the daughter of the porter, grows up in a neighborhood shaped by ordinary violence, gossip, and deprivation. This is a book that gracefully untangles entrenched patterns of urban poverty, and reveals how generational legacies of sexism and illiteracy distort a city’s power dynamics — and stunt its very best minds. Look especially for how Ferrante portrays Naples’ education system, and how the politics of language (dialect versus polished Italian) influence how characters navigate the city. *My Brilliant Friend* is the first in what is now a trio of books (there’s also *The Story of a New Name* and *Those Who Stay and Those Who Go*) that make up the Neapolitan trilogy. A fourth book is said to be in the works.

Lost in the City by Edward P. Jones

Featured city: Washington, D.C.

In 14 stories set in the capital city, the author of *The Known World* looks beyond the glad-handing political circles, polished bureaucrats, and the sophisticated tourism circuit. Instead, he zeroes in on the African-American experience in Northeast and Northwest, moving street by street through a little-seen D.C. Here, a girl raises pigeons on the roof of her apartment building. A man struggles to grow a neighborhood grocery. Another man who has found some stability is thrown off center when his teenage daughter runs away and never returns. A woman keeps up the pricey home that her son bought her with the money he earned from drugs. Jones’ sharp eyes and ears capture

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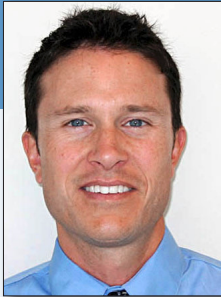
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Find JOBS and EVENTS CALENDAR at norcalapa.org



Director's note

By Jeff Baker

Holiday Party

Thank you to everyone who came out to celebrate at the annual Northern Section Holiday Party. This fun party has always been the place to eat great food and connect with planners from around the region. This year we got an early start, holding the event on Friday evening, November 21, at Bluestem Brasserie in San Francisco.

The party was a huge success; 120 people attended. (See [page 13](#).) As always, we held a raffle and raised over \$600 for the California Planning Foundation to benefit students pursuing planning degrees. I would like to extend a big thank you to our sponsors for their contributions on behalf of the California Planning Foundation: Dinwiddie & Associates; Don Bradley, AICP; Drolet Yoga; Eisen/Letunic; GHD; Juan Borrelli, AICP; LSA; PMC; and ABAG on behalf of the San Francisco Bay Trail Project. I would also like to recognize the dedicated group led by Florentina Craciun, AICP, without whom the event would not have been a success: Sandra Hamlat; Darcy Kremin, AICP; Tania Sheyner, AICP; Melissa Ruhl; Caroline Au; Sonia-Lynn Abenojar; and Shila Behzadiaria.

Election

The votes are in! Hearty congratulations to Erik Balsley, AICP, who was elected to the position of Director Elect, and Stuart Bussian, AICP, who was elected Administrative Director. Both take office on January 1, 2015, for a two-year term.

Board Transitions

I would like to recognize and thank for their years of service several Board members who have decided to step down, and also welcome new Board members.

Tania Sheyner, AICP, has stepped down after six years as Professional Development Director. John Cook, AICP, and Eileen Whitty, AICP, have turned in their badges as Awards Program co-Directors — Eileen after serving eight years! And Janet Palma stepped down as Planning Commission Representative, a post she held since 2012.

The Northern Section Board did not waste time filling the vacancies. At its meeting on November 5, the Board welcomed the following to their new Board positions: Jonathan Schuppert, AICP, Professional Development Director; Florentina Craciun, AICP, Awards Program co-Director; Gerri Caruso, AICP, South Bay Regional Activity Coordinator; and John Doughty, Monterey Bay co-Regional Activity Coordinator. There are still opportunities to serve on the Northern Section Board as Awards Program co-Director and Planning Commission Representative.

The New Year will bring a new Director to the Northern Section. It has been my pleasure to serve as your Section Director the past two years. I am very proud of the Northern Section Board and the accomplishments made during that time. This includes many learning opportunities, networking and social gatherings, and the contributions the Section has made to the planning profession. Andrea Ouse, AICP, will be the Northern Section Director beginning January 1, 2015. Her many years of service to the Northern Section and a wealth of experience make her well suited to the task. I will continue to support the Board as the Immediate Past Director. Thank you, everyone, for making my term successful!

I would like to wish everyone a happy holiday season and a prosperous new year! ■

Record drought along the Colorado. Beautiful photographs, a map, and a 3:45 video.
—Jonathan Waterman, *National Geographic*, November 23, 2014. <http://bit.ly/1ycZDT2>

The display of calling cards from firms offering professional services appears in every issue of *Northern News*. Fees paid by the firms for this service help defray the costs of this newsletter.

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Plan-it sustainably

By Scott T. Edmondson, AICP

APA's new Sustainability Champion program

This past summer, APA's Sustainable Communities Division (SCD) launched a sustainability leadership pilot, the State Chapter Sustainability Champion program.

The Division sought nominations and selected champions this past August and September. I was one of 10 champions chosen and look forward to working with Hing Wong, APA California's President Elect, in beginning to develop the program.

The idea for the program grew out of the research and facilitated discussion on mobilizing sustainability in state APA Chapters (<http://bit.ly/11XHdu6>) that I co-developed with Anne Miller of the Colorado APA Sustainability Committee for the 2013 APA National Conference in Chicago.

SCD's ultimate goal is to have one Sustainability Champion in each APA Chapter. Together, these Champions will form a national network with the credibility to influence the national discourse on sustainability. The Division's hopes for the program are that sustainability champions will —

- Advance the understanding and practice of sustainability planning and be a resource for fellow planners.
- Draw on support from others in the network and the SCD leadership to build local chapter sustainability planning capacity in their local chapters.
- Be professionally recognized as experts who speak for sustainable planning in their community and chapter.
- Undertake a one- or two-year term as an SCD Sustainability Champion, supported by a co-champion who would take over after the initial term.

The SCD's goal for the initial pilot program is to recruit one Champion from each of nine regions: (1) the West Coast; (2) the West; (3) the Midwest; (4) the Great Lakes; (5) South Central; (6) the Deep South; (7) the Southeast; (8) the Northeast; and (9) New England. A second goal is to form this initial network before the 2015 national conference in Seattle.

Locally, Champions will promote sustainability within their chapters by developing a work program reflecting chapter interest around some of the following functions:

- Being the voice for sustainability within the chapter — by delivering a regular sustainability report to the chapter board, for example.

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Plan-it sustainably (continued from previous page)

- Functioning as the SCD liaison to the chapter and disseminating Division news in the state or region.
- Being part of the national Sustainability Champions Network and a subject-matter expert for planners nationally.
- Documenting existing sustainability 'best practices' in the state.
- Initiating — or further developing an existing — 'sustainability track' for the chapter conference, and possibly extending this track year-round to further institutionalize sustainability capacity within the chapter.
- Networking with allied professional groups to develop broad-based support and greater impact for the Champions' work.
- Developing a sustainability committee within the chapter — or taking another approach preferred by the chapter.

My next steps include preparing a draft work plan and beginning discussions with the California Chapter Board to identify interests, issues, and priorities to be pursued in 2015. Through Northern Section's Sustainability Committee, I have started working with the 2015 APA California Conference's local host committee to develop the sustainability track for the conference. In addition, Northern Section's Sustainability Committee will be a key component of a likely statewide champion's network of interested California Section members.

If you would like to know more, have suggestions, or be kept informed, please e-mail scott.edmondson@sfgov.org.

Scott T. Edmondson, AICP, is founder and former co-director of Northern Section's Sustainability Committee (<http://bit.ly/11XGsBj>). He is the committee's Research Program Lead, and a strategic sustainability planner-economist with the San Francisco Planning Department.

Just how much are rents increasing? The year-over-year change for Bay Area November rents was 11.9 percent in the Oakland metro, 12.2 percent in the San Francisco metro, and 13.7 percent in the San Jose metro. The national average was 6.1 percent. —Trulia Rent Monitor (PDF), <http://on.trulia.com/1690ATw>

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Boomers and Millennials: planning for changing demographics in the Bay Area

By Melissa Ruhl

Over 120 community members and professional and student planners from around the Bay Area attended the San Jose State University Urban Planning Coalition's annual Fall Symposium on October 18, 2014. The theme of the day-long event was "Boomers and Millennials: Planning for Changing Demographics in the Bay Area." Led by keynote speaker John Rahaim, Director of Planning for the City and County of San Francisco, the panels included discussions of the sharing economy, the future of transportation, and changing housing needs.



John Rahaim (San Francisco Planning Director)

Because Boomers and Millennials make up nearly half the U.S. population, their unique living and working preferences will have an enormous impact on housing, transportation, and the economy. While both generations are looking to move back to the city, they also have interests in reinventing suburbia as Millennials begin to have children and Boomers aim to age in place. As they age, Boomers will face declining mobility — physically and in their ability to drive. Millennials, on the other hand, are generally less interested in driving than were Boomers in young adulthood.

Part-time and contract labor is becoming so ubiquitous for Millennials that the ideal of a worker growing with a company is no longer common. And as Boomers retire, millions will leave the workforce, facing the economic and social implications that accompany post-career life. The Bay Area is projected to gain over two million people by 2040. A disproportionate number of those will be Boomers and Millennials, and planning for the demographic shifts will be important in Northern California.

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Boomers and Millennials: planning for changing demographics in the Bay Area *(continued from previous page)*



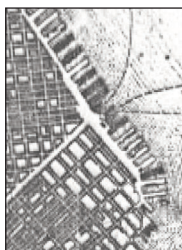
Sarah Bowab (SJSU), John Tu (City of San Jose), and Lola Torney (Alta Planning + Design) attended the symposium.

The UPC Symposium purposed to begin addressing these critical trends. John Rahaim delivered the keynote speech on preparing cities for urban dwellers of all ages, and particularly for the growing generations of Boomers and Millennials. Millennials, he said, are less interested in buying things and more interested in finding experiences, yet he cautioned that this shifting balance could turn the city from shopping mall into playground. He urged planners to blur the edges between public and private urban spaces to welcome people of all backgrounds and stages of life into the city. In planning for inclusive and appealing communities, he called for retaining a focus on resilience, diversity, and adaptability.

The first panel, “Cities and the Sharing Economy,” reminded us that cities are built for sharing. Led by moderator Laurel Prevetti, Community Development Director for the Town of Los Gatos, panelists represented sharing economy startups and the Oakland Economic Development Department. The panelists discussed topics ranging from the rise of entrepreneurship and part-time on-demand employment to the facilitation of more equitable and efficient food systems.

After a networking lunch, attendees reconvened for “Life beyond Privately Owned Cars.” Joseph Kott, lecturer at Stanford and SJSU, moderated. Panelists from transportation firms and the San Jose Downtown Association discussed dementia-ready transportation systems, the historic downturn in vehicle miles traveled, and the possibilities of shared autonomous vehicles.

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Boomers and Millennials: planning for changing demographics in the Bay Area *(continued from previous page)*



Panel 2, Life Beyond Privately Owned Cars: Jason Su (San Jose Downtown Association), William Baumgardner (ARUP), and Richard Lee (VRPA Technologies)

Trulia economist Ralph McLaughlin moderated the final panel, "Micro-Units and Aging in Place" with panelists from real estate and policy advocacy. In a spirited conversation, panelists presented alternatives for how to balance the economic need for diverse and affordable housing with the deeply human need for connected community — needs that will continue to intensify as Boomers retire and Millennials cultivate more flexible careers.

Preparing for these shifts will continue to shape the planning profession in the Bay Area and throughout the U.S. The Symposium brought together a wide audience of students, professionals, practitioners, and community members, sparked discussion, and left participants with new perspectives.

Melissa Ruhl, MA, is a graduate student in urban planning at San Jose State University and is the university's Student Representative to the Northern Section Board. ■

Letters

A big thanks for all your hard work putting together and guiding the newsletter. It is very professional.

William W. Abbott
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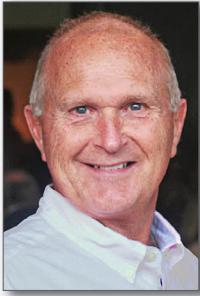
Where in the world?



Photo by Michael P. Laughlin, AICP. (Answer on [page 11.](#))

“Can America’s desert cities adapt? Los Angeles, Phoenix, Las Vegas, and many other western cities are all growing fast — and all are running out of water. No one expected these cities to sustain the kind of population they do now when the cities were founded. The towns made sense at the time: rivers, lakes, and natural springs provided enough water to support a small population. As the towns grew, they learned to cast further for water supplies. Beyond obtaining and recycling water, desert cities will have to restructure in order to become more water efficient and more hospitable to rising temperatures. Residential areas will have to be taller and contain more people, to be more efficient with water and energy. The idea that desert cities could function as a long-term water supply for any business sector that has to have a reliable water supply is going away quickly. It’s unlikely these industries will cease to exist, but they will likely have to move away from the desert.” —Thor Benson, <http://bit.ly/16936Jv>

Who's where



Mark Brodeur is now Community and Economic Development Director for Pacific Grove, California. He most recently served as assistant director of community development and strategic planning for the City of San Antonio, Texas. Originally from California, Mark also served as the contract community development director for Wasco and was a principal and owner of Urban Design Studio and RBF Consulting. Over a 35-year career, he served as president of the California Downtown Association and was a member of AIA's Sustainable Design Assessment Team (SDAT). Mark granted Ben Cohen & Jerry Greenfield their first business permit for an ice cream shop in an old gas station in downtown Burlington, Vermont.



Florentina Craciun, AICP, is now Associate Planner at PMC. Her previous positions included senior environmental planner at URS, staff researcher at UCLA's Lewis Center, and program manager for the public policy program at UCLA Extension. Florentina holds an MA in Urban Planning from UCLA and a BA in History from UC Santa Barbara. Florentina has served on the Northern Section Board since July 2012. She is the Regional Activity Co-coordinator for the East Bay region of Northern Section, and before that was the Section's Membership Director.



Joan Douglas-Fry, AICP, has joined the City of San José City Attorney's Office as a Legal Analyst, focusing on legal transactions relating to planning, development, and land use issues. Most recently, Joan was an associate environmental planner/project manager at WRA Environmental Consultants, San Rafael. Before WRA, she was a senior managing associate with Environmental Science Associates, Oakland. Joan has been Chapter Director of AEP – San Francisco Bay Area, and was a Planning Commissioner for the City of Brentwood. She has a B.A. in Geography (Environmental Analysis emphasis) from CSU Fullerton; a Land Use and Planning Certificate from UC Irvine; and most recently received a Paralegal Certificate from San Francisco State University (an ABA-approved program).



Ronny Kraft, AICP, is now an independent consultant for Ronny Kraft Consulting, specializing in transportation planning and GIS support to government and transit agencies. Concurrently, Ronny is a transportation planning consultant with Marin Transit and Petaluma Transit, and is Northern Section's Webmaster. Her previous experience includes transportation planning consultant to the San Mateo County Transportation District and Transportation Planner with HNTB. She holds a B.A. in Public Policy from Mills College.



APA member **Barbara Maloney** and **Michael Smiley**, the founding co-partners of BMS Design Group, have joined Page, a multidisciplinary architecture, engineering, interiors, and consulting firm with offices in major U.S. cities. The firm will temporarily be known as Page/BMS Design Group. Barbara will be a Principal and a leader at the firm's new office in San Francisco. Michael will be a Principal Emeritus. His career as an urban designer and landscape architect spans multiple continents. He has been a member of the Design Review Board of the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) since 1997. ■

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Annual Land Use Law Review and Update: Discuss recent developments in California law affecting land use, planning, and environmental compliance. Experts provide succinct and practical analysis on recent case law and legislative and administrative changes. Instructors: William Abbott, Cecily Talbert Barclay, and Matthew Gray. **AICP | CM 6.0**

CEQA Update, Issues, and Trends: Learn recent developments and emerging trends, and exchange ideas about handling key issues in the environmental review process. Instructors: Ken Bogdan and James Moose. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Complete Streets: From Adoption to Implementation: In-class and field exercises will be used to define Complete Streets design practices and suggest methods for shifting agency procedures to use Complete Streets design. Instructor: Paul Zykofsky. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Effective Communication: An Introduction to Sharing Technical and Scientific Information: Participants will learn how to assess their own communication skills, develop plans for targeted improvements, and employ effective techniques used by successful communicators. Instructor: Kandace Knudson. **AICP | CM 10.0**

Introduction to UrbanFootprint: Learn how to use UrbanFootprint, the new generation of land use scenario creation and analysis tools. Instructors: Nathaniel Roth and Raef Porter. **AICP | CM 12.0**

LAFCO: Planning and Regulating the Boundaries and Service Areas of Cities and Special Districts in California: Receive an overview of statutes and procedures for creating and modifying the organization of cities and special districts in California. Instructors: Paul Novak and Robert Braitman. **AICP | CM 6.0**

Land Use Planning for Non-Planners: An Introduction to Planning in California: Learn how to effectively participate in planning processes and to understand the impacts of the complex legal issues associated with both land use and environmental planning. Instructors: Vivian Kahn and Thomas Jacobson. **AICP | CM 5.0**

Project Planning for Permit Integration: Learn to integrate environmental permitting and consultation requirements for projects subject to CEQA and NEPA. Instructors: Antero Rivasplata and Megan Smith. **AICP | CM 6.0** ■

For course details and to enroll, visit www.extension.ucdavis.edu/land

Answer to "Where in the world?" (Page 9)

Prague, Czech Republic. The southwest corner of Old Town Square, seen from the Old Town Hall clock tower. Photo: Michael P. Laughlin, AICP.

"A guide to San Francisco's design and architecture. Click through [Mashable's interactive] infographic to learn about San Francisco's architectural style, famous structures, the new buildings that will transform the city's skyline, and a brief overview of the [Golden Gate] Bridge specs."
—Emily Siegel, <http://on.mash.to/12wEt7v>

ABAG launches PDA Showcase

An updated resource for San Francisco Bay Area communities — the Priority Development Area (PDA) Showcase — is now online at <http://bit.ly/1yx6t8S>. The Showcase is an easy to use, interactive mapping tool, highlighting the Bay Area's PDAs. It offers interactive maps, key facts, implementation needs, and a description of the goals and vision for each PDA.

Priority Development Areas are locally nominated infill areas where there is local commitment to developing housing along with amenities and services to meet the day-to-day needs of residents in a pedestrian-friendly environment served by transit. The growth envisioned through PDAs is based in large part on local aspirations and community context. The PDAs reflect the diversity of the Bay Area's communities.

Comments or questions about content on the site should be directed to ABAG Regional Planner Christy Leffall, ChristyL@abag.ca.gov.

To apply for a new PDA, or to make changes to an existing PDA, visit <http://bit.ly/1yx6OrW> before June 30, 2015.

APA membership numbers climb

Northern Section increased its membership by 43 over the previous month. The increase accounts for 62.3 percent of the total monthly increase of 69 in statewide membership. At 1,674 members on Dec. 1, 2014 (which includes 29 Chapter-only), Northern Section's membership is greater than it has been since a peak in 2007 when it was 1,876.

Northern's 657 AICP members account for 31.8 percent of the state's 2,066 AICP-ers.

Northern's 1,674 APA members are 31.5 percent of the statewide membership of 5,312.

Call for nominations — Get recognized by the APA Northern CA Section!

Northern Section is officially opening a call for nominations for Section Awards. In previous years, several Northern Section winners went on to garner State Awards. Let's keep up the tradition and recognize the best in planning.

The Section Awards Categories for 2015 are:

Project Awards

- Opportunity and Empowerment
- Comprehensive Plan — Large and Small Jurisdictions (2 awards)
- Implementation — Large and Small Jurisdictions (2 awards)
- Innovation in Green Community Planning
- Economic Planning and Development
- Transportation Planning
- Best Practices
- Grassroots Initiative
- Public Outreach
- Urban Design
- Communications Initiative
- Advancing Diversity and Social Change
- Planning Landmark
- Hard-won Victory

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- Academic Award
- Planning Pioneer
- Distinguished Service
- Distinguished Contribution
- Section Activity
- Planning Emeritus Network (PEN)

Get all the details, rules, and applications at:

<http://norcalapa.org/programs/awards/>

The deadline for nominations is Thursday, March 5, 2015

Mark your calendars: Join our **annual Awards Gala dinner** to learn more about the best in Northern Section planning. It's happening **Friday, May 16, 2015**, at *Scott's Seafood, Jack London Square, Oakland*.

AICP | CM Credit is pending for this event.

For more information, please contact Awards Co-Directors Florentina Craciun at fraciun@pmcworld or Carmela Campbell at CarmelaC@unioncity.org



Season's greetings!

APA California Northern's 2014 Holiday Party was another joyous — and early — seasonal event: A great party, held Friday, November 21, at Bluestem Brasserie, 1 Yerba Buena Lane, on a plaza that fronts San Francisco's Market Street. Northern Section thanks the many board members and volunteers who pitched in to organize the event and make it such a success ([see page 3](#)). We especially thank our sponsors ([same page](#)) and those who contributed attractive gifts for the evening's raffle. The drawing raised money for the California Planning Foundation to be used for scholarships for students in planning throughout Northern California.



Susanne Drolet; Juan Borrelli, AICP; Florentina Craciun, AICP; Jeff Baker.



Steve Noack, AICP; Terry Blount, AICP.



Shila Behzadiazaria; Steve Le; Brian Soland, AICP; Marco Arguelles; Charlie Bryant, AICP.



Sherrie Wayman; Dave Davis, AICP; Florentina Craciun, AICP; Andrea Ouse, AICP.

(continued on next page)

Season's greetings!

(continued from previous page)



Laura Thompson; Alex Amoroso, AICP.



Sam Blanchard; Paul Sohn; Hing Wong, AICP.



Hanson Hom, AICP; Sally Barros, AICP.



San Jose State alumni.



Raffle winners.



Sam Blanchard; Barry Miller, FAICP; Lisa Wise.

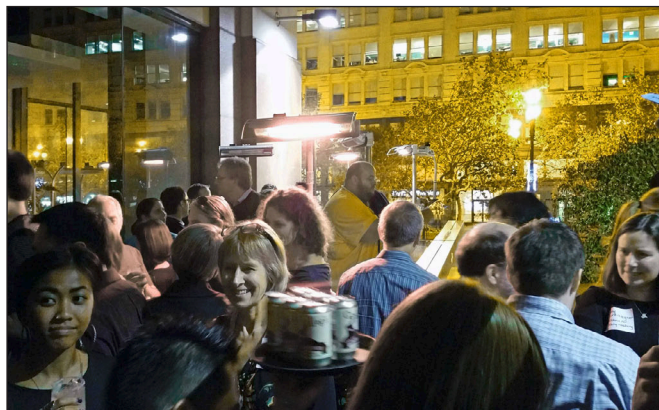
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Season's greetings!

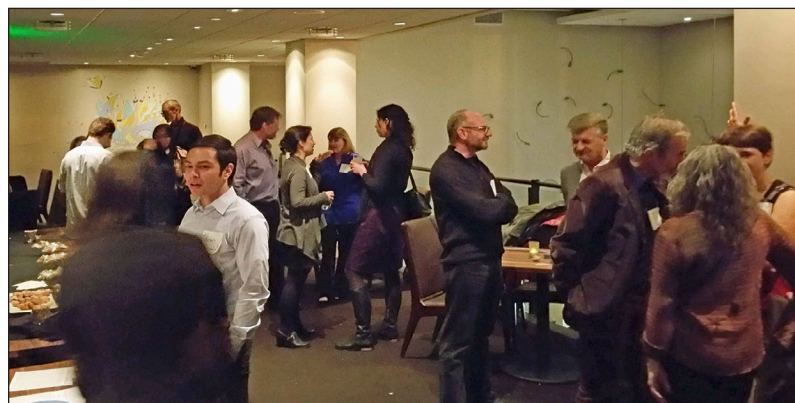
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Raffle tickets.



On the outside terrace.



Food and conversation.



Elise and George Osner, AICP; Naphtali Knox, FAICP.



On the terrace.



Raffle winner, Joan Douglas-Fry, AICP.



Norcal roundup

Assembled by Jennifer Piozet, associate editor

Emeryville's all-in-one center

Contra Costa Times, December 8, 2014

Doug Oakley, <http://bit.ly/1D1R5E7> • “This little city wedged between Oakland and Berkeley is combining its school system with city services in a \$90 million project that will offer K-12 education, health, and recreation all in one spot. Construction on the city-schools partnership, called Emeryville Center of Community Life, started about a year ago, and when it is completed will include elementary and high schools for 700 students, a public swimming pool, a health clinic, a library, a recreation center, and teen and senior centers.

“Emeryville City Manager Sabrina Landreth said the project on San Pablo Avenue, between 47th and 53rd streets, has been in the ‘vision stages’ for about 12 years and once carried a \$200 million price tag. She said the city, which has about 10,000 residents, had to get a state law passed to allow the school and community centers to be used and financed together.

“A gymnasium and the swimming pool will be finished next summer, and the high school, called Emery Secondary School, will open in November or December 2015.

“The school district is putting about \$70 million toward construction of the project and the city the remaining \$20 million. Emeryville voters in 2010 approved property tax-funded bonds that will cover construction costs.

Marin County business is up

Marin Independent Journal, December 7, 2014

Janis Mara, <http://bit.ly/12H11EL> • “After years of struggle followed by recovery, nearly every industry in Marin is growing and on course to continue slow, steady expansion for years to come, experts say. Personal income is projected to grow at an average rate of 2.2 percent between 2014 and 2016; payroll employment shows continued growth; Marin’s taxable sales per capita are the third-highest in the state; and the median home price has hovered around \$1 million all year.

“Commercial occupancy has continued to improve in San Rafael, said Tom Adams, an economic development specialist with the city. Sales tax revenues are increasing in San Rafael, Adams said. For example, sales tax receipts for the second quarter this year were 10 percent higher than those in the second quarter of 2013.

“As commercial and residential rents soar in San Francisco, companies move to Marin and other surrounding counties and towns. This has led to increased rents for commercial buildings in southern Marin, causing further spillover to the north.”

Google will take over much of Moffett

Mercury News, November 10, 2014

<http://bit.ly/1zIEbIK> • “[Google plans to] spend more than \$200 million to rehab [three] hangars, create an educational center, and assume management for much of the historic [Moffett Field] air base [in Mountain View]. Google’s subsidiary, Planetary Ventures, also agreed to pay NASA \$1.16 billion to rent about 1,000 acres on the site from the federal agency over the next 60 years. NASA said the lease will save it \$6.3 million a year in maintenance and operating costs.

“[The lease arrangement] appears to finally rescue Hangar One, which was built in 1931 to house naval airships and was closed in 2003 after tests revealed toxic chemicals were leaching from its roof. Under the deal, NASA plans to

continue operating its Ames Research Center at Moffett Field, and other groups — including the California Air National Guard — will remain there with no change in their operations.

“Google already has a significant presence at Moffett Field. Its founders, Larry Page and Sergey Brin, have a fleet of jets parked at Moffett, and the company has a separate long-term lease to build a planned office campus on 42 acres there. It also hopes to build classrooms, labs, and possibly housing on another Moffett Field site leased by a coalition of local colleges, and it is using the field to test drive advanced versions of its self-driving automobile.”

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

San Francisco mulls Central Subway extension

Next City, December 2, 2014

Sandy Smith, <http://bit.ly/1ygoN4w> • “The \$1.6 billion, 1.7-mile Central Subway tunnel, an extension of San Francisco’s T-Third Street light-rail line to serve Union Square and Chinatown (see map), is still five years away from its projected 2019 opening, and already local transportation planners and advocates are contemplating an extension that would take the line to Fisherman’s Wharf.

“The *San Francisco Chronicle* (November 26) states that a study commissioned by the San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency (SFMTA), the San Francisco Transportation Authority, and the city planning department concludes that the extension would increase daily ridership on the subway by some 40,000, a 55 percent rise in the T-Third line’s overall ridership, and would fare well in the competition for federal New Starts funding.

“The study puts the price tag for a Fisherman’s Wharf extension at anywhere from \$367 million to \$1.4 billion, depending on which of 14 possible route alignments is chosen. All of them would begin at the end of the tunnel now under construction, which will extend past Chinatown station to a point near Washington Square in North Beach, where a new station could be built as part of the extension.

“As with the Central Subway itself, the extension proposal has supporters and opponents. Howard Wong, a member of the anti-Central Subway group Save Muni, [said] the money could be better spent on new and improved bus service as well as free transit.

“The study is just the first step in a Central Subway extension. The next step is for the line to be included in the SFMTA’s rail strategy and in city and regional transportation plans.”



Watsonville struggles with chromium 6

Santa Cruz Sentinel, December 5, 2014

Donna Jones, <http://bit.ly/1zHQUbz> •

“Facing a \$26 million bill to achieve new state water quality standards, Watsonville officials are seeking help from Sacramento. On December 5, 2014, they made a plea for financial assistance and more time to comply with the new chromium 6 standard.

“The city must show it’s in compliance with a state Department of Public Health standard for chromium 6 of 10 parts per billion by January 2016. Previously, the rule called for total chromium — including the benign chromium 3 as well as the carcinogenic chromium 6 — to be no more than 50 parts per billion.

“Eight of the city’s 12 wells are expected to fall short of the new standard and to require construction of treatment systems, estimated to cost \$26 million. Ongoing maintenance is estimated to run another \$1.7 million annually.

“Chromium 6, also known as hexavalent chromium, can be the result of industrial pollution, but is naturally occurring in Pajaro Valley groundwater. The eight affected wells, which met the previous standard, produce 80 percent of the water distributed to more than 60,000 customers in Watsonville and surrounding rural neighborhoods.”

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

SV BRT will not degrade auto travel

CityLab, November 19, 2014

Eric Jaffe, <http://bit.ly/1tqKNEe> • “Silicon Valley may [soon] offer buses [that] can compete with cars. The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority has released a draft environmental review for a 17.6-mile bus-rapid transit line on El Camino Real connecting San Jose with Palo Alto. In the best-case scenario, BRT would travel the corridor almost as quickly as cars by 2018, when the line hopes to open.

“The [draft EIR shows that] transit that travels in dedicated lanes can compete with driving in terms of commute time and convenience, but transit in mixed lanes can’t. If cities are going to invest in BRT, they need to dedicate travel lanes, or they’re using mountains of taxpayer money for a bus service that isn’t much better than what already exists.

“Drivers often complain about losing travel lanes to transit, [but] their commute times barely budge in any of the future scenarios. In 2018, even with a dedicated BRT lane, the full eastbound commute by car takes only seconds longer than it would today — largely because many commuters shift modes. In 2040, a drive alongside dedicated BRT will take only three minutes more than it would have otherwise.

“El Camino BRT is far from a done deal. It was prepared using California’s old car-friendly traffic standards, [and] drivers may raise a fuss or threaten litigation. And the full-build would need to secure \$233 million in capital funding.”

How Millennials have changed rush hour in 14 cities

Next City, December 4, 2014

<http://bit.ly/12yP4yf> • “The U.S. Census Bureau has released a new tool, ‘Young Adults Then and Now’ (<http://bit.ly/1wfgC9V>), that mashes the info gathered about 18- to 34-year-olds in censuses from 1980, 1990, and 2000, and the 2009–2013 American Community Survey. The result is a robust, mapped-up, color-chartful presentation of numbers via dropdown menus and metro drilldowns that you could easily spend an afternoon eyeballing. [Next City] zeroed in on how the commuting habits of today’s younger adults stack up against those of past generations in 14 U.S. metros.”

“Here’s how the number of young people driving to work has changed [in the Bay Area] since 1980.”

Percent of Workers age 18 to 34 years who drove a car, truck, van, or carpooled to work

San Francisco-Oakland-Hayward		
1980	71.2%	±0.30%
1990	73.6%	±0.30%
2000	71.9%	±0.30%
2009–2013	66.6%	±0.46%
San Jose-Sunnyvale-Santa Clara		
1980	88.7%	±0.30%
1990	89.2%	±0.30%
2000	88.7%	±0.30%
2009–2013	85.5%	±0.54%

(Norcal roundup continues on next page)

Applications open for AICP Certified Urban Designer (AICP CUD). This Specialty Certification recognizes an individual’s knowledge, experience, and application of design principles. The application window is now open and will close on January 27, 2015, at midnight, Central Time. The testing window is May 4–18, 2015. At a minimum, applicants must be members of AICP in good standing, and have completed a total of eight years of experience in urban design at the time of application submission. Get the details and begin your application at <http://bit.ly/1BzLyDi>

Reddit's rent struggle

Slate, November 14, 2014

Will Oremus, <http://slate.me/1zlW0fl> • “Reddit’s chief executive, Yishan Wong, resigned [in November]. Wong wanted to move the company’s headquarters from the heart of San Francisco’s trendy SoMa district to Daly City, and his colleagues apparently rebelled.

“Daly City occupies the middle ground between San Francisco — the tech world’s City Upon a Hill — and Colma, which is literally a giant graveyard. This is not to say that Daly City is without its charms, especially as a place to settle down and raise a family.

“Contrast that with the location of Reddit’s current headquarters, at 520 Third St. in San Francisco, and you can start to see why a faction of the company’s employees may have been aghast at the prospect of a move. SoMa is easily accessible by foot and by transit from San Francisco, Oakland, and Berkeley. Daly City, for most, would require a lengthy, traffic-snarled commute — probably by car, or at best by park-and-ride. If Reddit is outgrowing its current space and can’t afford anything large enough in a desirable location, Daly City could seem like an acceptable middle ground.

“The broader context ... is that wealthy tech startups have pushed San Francisco real-estate prices so high that almost nobody can afford a large office space there — not even a wealthy tech startup.”

VTA backs off BART station changes

Silicon Valley Business Journal, December 2, 2014

Nathan Donato-Weinstein, <http://bit.ly/1FMn0q4> • “In the face of mounting public opposition, the Valley Transportation Authority on December 1, 2014 said it was moving away from a funding strategy that could have cut two planned BART stations from the line’s next phase.

“That’s a shift from November, when officials said they would also study a cheaper, two-station plan that they hoped would be more competitive in the all-important race for federal funding. That scheme could have seen the Santa Clara and Alum Rock stations axed. But now the agency is opting not to go after the federal ‘New Starts’ funding program at this time, and is instead moving along with the original station plan for the purposes of the environmental process.

“A four-station Phase 2 is expected to cost \$4.7 billion, and VTA somehow needs to find or save about \$2.4 billion if it wants to build them all. The shortfall is thanks to lower-than-expected revenue from Measure A, the sales-tax measure voters passed in the early 2000s.

“Both stations that were on the chopping block are in locations where cities implemented new planning zones that contemplated much denser housing and commercial development.

“In Santa Clara, the city upzoned a 244-acre area around the city’s transit center allowing for up to 1,650 new residential units and 2 million square feet of commercial. San Jose adopted the Five Wounds Village Plan, which aimed for 1.2 million square feet of commercial and 845 new units, centered on a public plaza above the station.” ■

“What makes the Bay Area’s housing shortage so problematic is the confluence of a growing population and the historically slow pace of building, which exacerbates rental price growth. ‘The problem isn’t with the job creation, it’s with our failed housing policy,’ says Gabriel Metcalf, executive director of SPUR.” —Gillian B. White, <http://theatlantic.com/1152T7f>

Natural patterns cause CA drought, study finds

Santa Cruz Sentinel, December 8, 2014

Lisa M. Krieger, <http://bit.ly/1wZcx9q> • “Natural patterns, not human-caused climate change, produced one of California’s worst droughts, researchers have concluded. An atmospheric ridge over the North Pacific, which resulted in decreased rain and snowfall over the past three years, was ‘due to natural variations of ocean systems, with sea surface temperatures largely responsible,’ said Richard Seager, lead author of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-sponsored study, in a December 8 news conference.

“They assert that global warming is a problem — particularly for California, because precipitation is more likely to fall as rain, not snow, so we don’t have stored water during the summer when it is needed. And global warming worsens the effects of drought, because water evaporates faster in high temperatures, they added.

“[But] sea surface temperatures in a patch of water in the western part of the tropical Pacific Ocean are largely to blame. The conditions that led to the drought, a pesky high pressure system dubbed the ‘Ridiculously Resilient Ridge,’ have now vanished — although they could change again before the end of the winter.”

Latino Urbanism redux

Los Angeles Times, December 6, 2014

Christopher Hawthorne, <http://lat.ms/1s6qM5L>

• The L.A. Times Architecture Critic writes that “many politicians and policymakers in Southern California are finding inspiration in Latino Urbanism, a term that describes the range of ad hoc ways in which immigrants from Mexico and Central and South America have remade pockets of American cities to feel at least a little like the places they left behind.” Hawthorne credits James Rojas, “a city planning consultant and East L.A. native,” for coining the term “Latino Urbanism.” (See Rojas’ “Latino Vernacular,” the lead article in November’s *Northern News*, at <http://bit.ly/1srIOZY>.)

Writes Hawthorne, “After decades of building walkable private enclaves — hugely popular escapes from the rule of the automobile — we are finally turning to the design of the streets and sidewalks themselves. In Los Angeles, a city with deeper Latin roots than Anglo ones, a street remade to mimic Latino Urbanism is a slice of the city both reinventing itself and looking back to some important first principles.”

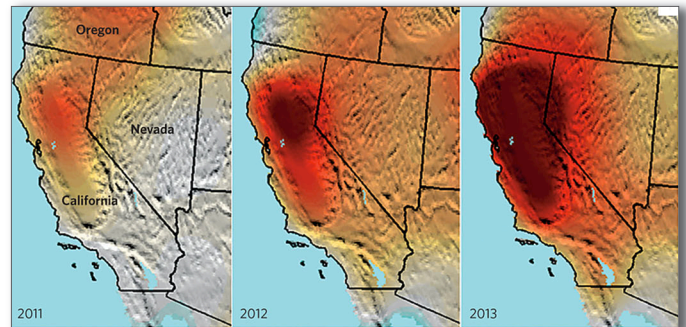
Worst drought in 1,200 years

San Jose Mercury News, December 5, 2014

Paul Rogers, <http://bit.ly/1tWy5N3> • “The last three years of drought were the most severe that California has experienced in at least 1,200 years, according to a new scientific study published December 4. Analyzing tree rings that date back to 800 A.D. — a time when Vikings were marauding Europe and the Chinese were inventing gunpowder — there is no three-year period when California’s rainfall has been as low and its temperatures as hot as they have been from 2012 to 2014, the researchers found.

“The scientists measured tree rings from 278 blue oaks in central and southern California. Tree rings show the age of trees, and their width shows how wet each year was because trees grow more during wet years. The researchers compared the information to a database of other tree ring records from longer-living trees like giant sequoias and bristlecone pines, dating back 1,200 years.

“Meanwhile, the rain needs to be relentless and drenching to break the drought cycle. Experts emphasize that a three-year drought cannot be erased in a few days. Not only are reservoirs low, but there are huge ‘rainfall deficits’ built up from the past three years.”



California’s groundwater depletion over the last three years.

Images by J. T. Reager, NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory, California Institute of Technology, from “The Global Groundwater Crisis,” *Nature Climate Change*, November 2014, by James S. Famiglietti. <http://bit.ly/1G7VhRT>

(California continues on next page)

Court of Appeal rejects EIR for SANDAG's Regional Transportation Plan

California Land Use and Development Law Report,
November 25, 2014

Christopher Chou, Julie Jones, Stephen Kostka, and Barbara Schussman, <http://bit.ly/1tueF1H> • “In a long-awaited 2-1 decision, a court of appeal overturned the environmental impact report for the San Diego Association of Governments’ 2050 Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy. *Cleveland National Forest Foundation v. San Diego Association of Governments* (4th Dist., Div. 1, No. D063288, Nov. 24, 2014). The most remarkable ruling, in what is likely to be viewed as a highly controversial decision, is the majority’s finding that the EIR was deficient because it did not assess the plan’s consistency with the 2050 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal contained in an executive order issued by the Governor in 2005...

“In a footnote, the majority stated that ... the court’s concern was that the EIR failed to recognize the conflict between the increase in greenhouse gas emissions under the plan and the decrease required by the Executive Order.” ...

In essence, according to an email from CP&DR (Nov. 25, 2014), the Court “ruled that SANDAG had to analyze consistency between its transportation plan and the 2050 emissions goals in Executive Order S-3-05. The ruling doesn’t require SANDAG to meet the EO’s target of an 80 percent reduction in GHG emissions by 2050; rather, the EO’s goals must be considered as part of the EIR for SANDAG’s long-range Regional Transportation Plan and Sustainable Communities Strategy.”

SANDAG and San Diego County are both seeking state Supreme Court review of Fourth District appellate decisions that rejected their respective planning processes against climate change. (CP&DR, Dec. 8, 2014)

Judge dismisses Central Coast Williamson Act lawsuit

Santa Maria Times, November 13, 2014

Erin Lennon, <http://bit.ly/1tqMe5O> •

“A Santa Barbara County Superior Court judge has dismissed a lawsuit by the community group Save the Valley LLC against Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians Tribal Chairman Vincent Armenta.

“Save the Valley’s lawsuit argued that the tribe hadn’t signed a county-issued Williamson Act assumption agreement when it purchased its 1,400-acre Camp 4 property from Fess Parker LLC in 2010.

“When the tribe filed notice of its assumption agreement, it added a statement that decreed a number of points, including that nothing in the assumption agreement would limit or erase the tribe’s sovereign immunity or change the tribe’s terms of ownership. It also stated that federal and tribal law would continue to govern the agreement if the U.S. government takes the land into trust on behalf of the tribe.

“Judge Timothy Staffel ruled Nov. 6 that his court did not have jurisdiction over the matter because of the tribe’s sovereign immunity.” ■



Beijing and Forbidden City by drone, 4:18, Trey Ratcliff, June 19, 2014.

<http://youtu.be/A8l5Z01OKvw>

Tulsa mayor decrees no sidewalk access to city's fabulous new park

Streetsblog USA, December 9, 2014

Angie Schmitt, <http://bit.ly/1yznlXw> • “Tulsa, Oklahoma, is getting ready to build a new flagship park, called A Gathering Place — a \$350 million project supported entirely by private foundations, most notably the Kaiser Family Foundation. But thanks to Mayor Dewey Bartlett, it might lack one very basic amenity: sidewalk access.

“A few months ago, Bartlett, who is also president of the Keener Oil and Gas Company, issued an executive order eliminating plans for a sidewalk connection on Riverside Drive, an important north-south street that fronts the park and connects to downtown. The finished park is expected to draw about 1 million visitors a year.

“Bill Leighty, of the Smart Growth Tulsa Coalition, says the mayor's decision violates the city's complete streets program and seems to have been motivated by prejudice against people who would walk to the park. The historic neighborhoods surrounding the park are very wealthy, and the local press has reported on relationships between nearby property owners and the mayor that may present a conflict of interest.

“Bartlett contends that a sidewalk on Riverside Drive would not be safe for pedestrians because speeding drivers might mount the sidewalk and injure people. Instead, the anti-sidewalk contingent has proposed a circuitous park access route that would compel people to walk on a bridge over Riverside Drive and through some trails. Leighty says the safety concerns are ‘a smoke screen’ to obscure the fact that opponents simply want to keep people on foot away from their neighborhood.”

Legal battle opens over Chicago's Lucas Museum

Chicago Sun-Times, November 25, 2014

Jon Seidel, <http://bit.ly/1twwhyPE> • “A federal judge ordered the city of Chicago not to physically alter the proposed site of The Lucas Museum of Narrative Art on the lakefront until further order of the court. Friends of the Parks filed suit in November to stop the proposed construction on the site between McCormick Place and Soldier Field where filmmaker George Lucas wants to build a state-of-the-art museum. Friends of the Parks argues the proposed site of the Lucas Museum ‘consists entirely of land recovered from the navigable waters of Lake Michigan’ and that the state of Illinois is the ‘exclusive trustee’ of that landfill.

“The city's legal department has said in the past that the Lucas Museum ‘will be in full compliance with all applicable laws and will be treated like every other museum on the campus. This museum is a substantial investment in Chicago's cultural scene that will create green space, billions of dollars in local economic impact and hundreds of construction and permanent jobs.’”

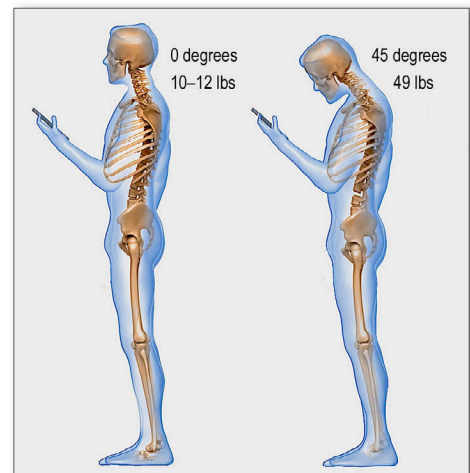
Keep your head up, not down

TODAY Health (NBC News), November 19, 2014

A. Pawlowski, <http://on.today.com/1tpjWHJ> • “A new study reveals that every time you look down at your cellphone to text, it's equal to four bowling balls weighing down on your spine.

“Dr. Ken Hansraj, a spinal and orthopedic surgeon in Poughkeepsie, New York, set out to measure the impact that the typical texting posture — head tilted forward, shoulders drooping — is having on our bodies. An adult head weighs 10–12 pounds in a neutral position, but by tilting it forward, the forces it exerts on the neck can surge — up to 60 pounds when the head is tilted by 60 degrees. That may lead to ‘early wear, tear, degeneration, and possibly surgeries,’ the study found.

“‘Wherever you go, people are heads down into their phones, especially teenagers,’ Hansraj told TODAY. ‘I'm not against technology. My message is just be cognizant of where your head is in space.’ You don't have to bring your device up to eye level, he said. Your eyes have a range of motion — look down at your phone without tilting your head. You'll have a better day and better posture.”



The weight seen by the spine increases when bending the neck at varying degrees. From an image courtesy Dr. Kenneth K. Hansraj, MD, via *TODAY Health*. <http://on.today.com/1tpjWHJ>

(U.S. continues on next page)

Biggest urban challenge is concentrated poverty, not gentrification

Next City, December 5, 2014

Joe Cortright, <http://bit.ly/12tfj9s> • “One of the most visible changes to the urban landscape has been the migration ... to the close-in neighborhoods of the country’s large metropolitan areas and the real estate development that has followed. Countless headlines decry the trend of coffee shops, craft breweries, and loft apartments infiltrating inner-city neighborhoods.

“It would be easy to think that displacement is the new economic normal, but how many neighborhoods that used to have high rates of poverty have actually gentrified, and how many people have actually been displaced by this new development?

“To answer those questions, City Observatory analyzed census data from 1970 to 2010 and presented the results in a new report [December 2014, that] traces the history of high-poverty neighborhoods in large U.S. cities. A PDF of the report narrative is available at <http://bit.ly/12teRrE>. Sortable tables of metro area data and links to neighborhood level maps are available at <http://bit.ly/1rY4yrZ>.

Boulder Planning Board approves Google campus plan — with conditions

Daily Camera, December 5, 2014

Alex Burness, <http://bit.ly/1wZJDGf> • “After a more than seven-hour meeting that appeared to be headed nowhere, the Boulder Planning Board voted to conditionally approve Google’s plan to construct a massive campus in the heart of the city, a facility that would give the tech giant room to expand locally to about five times its current size.

“Google had intended to develop four acres near the intersection of 30th and Pearl streets, through a two-phase development that would require tearing down several structures to build three four-story buildings, and a large underground parking lot, on a campus that could accommodate a local employee base of 1,500. Currently, Google’s Boulder workforce totals about 340.

“A discussion around the campus aesthetics bled into one regarding the ground floor of the buildings. At the moment, there is no plan to introduce any public retail or restaurants at street level. Even though Google aspires to move into Boulder’s busiest commercial district, certain board members found the absence of shopping and dining options as problematic within the pedestrian experience.

“Board member Liz Payton [noted that the] ‘comprehensive plan policy is about neighborhoods as building blocks. I think this [campus] has little relation to its context. It will be a very nice place for the employees, but, as far as addressing the public realm, especially the streetscape, I think it falls short.’”

Hidden households may boost housing market

PR Newswire, November 3, 2014

<http://prn.to/10CT1Bx> • “Many Americans moved in together as housing costs outpaced income over the last decade. If these doubled-up households divide, housing demand will pick up.

- “More than a third of U.S. adults were living with roommates or adult family members in 2012, up from 25.4 percent in 2000.
- “Household size has risen from 1.75 adults in 2000 to 1.83 adults in 2012.”

According to Zillow, had “the number of adults per household remained constant over that period, we would have 5.4 million extra households on top of the existing 116 million households. These extra households are a source of potential housing energy (the number of additional households if the average number of adults per households reverted to year 2000 levels). The national level of poten-

tial housing energy amounts to a 4.7 percent increase in the number of households.”

In the San Francisco and San Jose metro areas, there would be a combined 101,000 additional households had people not “doubled-up. As the housing market becomes friendlier for buyers and the economic recovery continues, those lost households could represent a significant source of pent-up demand. ‘Continued home affordability, an increasing supply of both for-rent and for-sale homes, and the potential for incomes to grow more quickly as the economy recovers will all help the [housing] market realize this potential,’ said Zillow Chief Economist Dr. Stan Humphries.”

The Zillow report, “Hidden Households and their future housing activity” (November 2, 2014), is available at <http://bit.ly/1ujxB85>.

(U.S. continues on next page)

Upward mobility or affordable housing?

The Atlantic, November 19, 2014

Derek Thompson, <http://theatlantic.com/1Ar7UWU> • “Dayton is the most affordable housing market in the United States, according to Trulia chief economist Jed Kolko, while San Francisco is the least affordable place to live in America. But the San Francisco–San Jose area has a better record of social mobility than just about any region in the country, according to Harvard economist Raj Chetty.

“The Dayton–SF dilemma [is] about a broader dilemma for young workers — in particular, young couples looking to buy a home, raise children, and achieve the American Dream. The cities with the least affordable housing often have the best social mobility. And the cities with the worst social mobility often have the most affordable housing. When good jobs for the middle class and affordable homes are living in different cities, it represents a slow-motion splintering of the American Dream.

“The American Dream begins with a good job and place to live that you can afford. But today, those two halves of the American Dream are living apart. The good jobs and high wages are in unaffordable cities. The affordable homes cluster in the cities with lower wages and less upwardly mobile families.

“Until more rich coastal cities find ways to match the income growth of their residents with more housing development, the best advice for young people seeking the American Dream isn’t ‘Go West, young man’ or ‘Go East, young woman.’ It’s ‘Check out Pittsburgh, Minneapolis, and Salt Lake City.’ ”

Sinking in Seattle

The Seattle Times, December 8, 2014

Mike Lindblom, <http://bit.ly/1yzntpT> • “About 30 buildings in Seattle’s historic Pioneer Square neighborhood will be inspected both inside and out for damage after the soil deep below slumped an inch from Highway 99 tunnel work. Groundwater pumping beneath stranded tunnel-boring machine Bertha, from wells as deep as 185 feet, is the suspected cause of the troubling soil settlement. The Alaskan Way Viaduct also sagged 1 to 1¼ inches in mid-November, the state reported earlier. But nearly all that settlement is evenly distributed, so it’s not causing new cracks or strains on the 61-year-old elevated highway, said Tim Moore, senior WSDOT bridge engineer.

“Excavation stopped several days ago in the deep shaft that’s being built in front of the buried tunnel machine, where the front end eventually will be lifted to the surface for repairs. Survey crews on Sunday confirmed the viaduct has sustained only a negligible amount of uneven settlement, on the order of one- or two-tenths of an inch in one section, Dave Sowers, geotechnical engineer for WSDOT. Uneven settlement poses the risk of cracking or weakening the old viaduct, while sinking evenly is considered more benign.

“Nonetheless, the data are disturbing because officials do not entirely understand the causes and solutions. The area has long been understood to present high risk of soil settlement, when state lawmakers chose a tunnel in 2009 to replace the viaduct.” ■

“Housing’s Millennial mismatch. To see how the age distribution of a metro’s population relates to home prices, Trulia identified the 10 markets with the highest shares of each of four distinct generations: millennials (age 20–34); Gen X (age 35–49); boomers (age 50–69); and seniors (age 70 and up). In the 10 markets where millennials account for the largest share of the population, the average year-over-year price increase was 6.1 percent — below the 7.4 percent national increase. Markets with the highest shares of Gen Xers, including Raleigh, San Francisco, and San Jose, averaged price increases of 9.4 percent — highest among the four age groups. In metros with higher millennial shares, homeownership tends to be less affordable for this group. For instance, in Austin, Honolulu, New York, and San Diego, 20–34 year-olds account for at least 23.5 percent of the population. But fewer than 30 percent of homes for sale in those markets are within reach of the typical millennial household.” —Jed Kolko, <http://on.trulia.com/168XjDM>

Ancient stepwells may help solve India's water crisis

CityLab, November 21, 2014

Laura Bliss, <http://bit.ly/1tqNeH7> • “West India [is dotted with] stepwells — hundreds of carved-stone trenches with winding staircases and colonnades reaching as deep as 13 stories into the ground to draw from the water table. Many are strikingly beautiful. Most are quickly disappearing.

“Emerging around the fourth century C.E., stepwells guaranteed a year-round water supply, particularly in the semi-arid states of Gujarat and Rajasthan. By the 11th century, they'd become canvases for grand, stylistically diverse architectural visions.

“For women, these were (and in many cases remain) places for social gathering. Some were (and remain) consecrated temples, with elaborate carvings of deities encircling the walls. But with the 19th-century arrival of the British raj, stepwells began a descent into obsolescence, replaced with modern plumbing, taps, and storage tanks. These days most stepwells are dry, as a result of unregulated tapping — a culprit in India's current water crisis.

“Delhi officials [recently] gave the go-ahead to de-silt and restore five medieval stepwells in the city, following the successful revitalization of two others. Some Indian engineers are working hard to raise awareness of stepwells as masterpieces of architecture and engineering. One estimates she's seen about 80 throughout the country and never fails to be struck by their disorienting grandeur. ‘They subvert the notion of what architecture usually means. We look up at architecture, we look across at architecture, but we rarely do we look down.’”



Rani ki vav (the Queen's Stepwell), on the banks of the Saraswati River, Patan, India. Built as a memorial in the 11th century CE, the stepwell was designed as an inverted temple highlighting the sanctity of water. Photo: Bernard Gagnon via Wikimedia Commons, <http://bit.ly/1rGNzKD>

The global groundwater crisis

Nature Climate Change, October 29, 2014 (paywalled)

J. S. Famiglietti, <http://bit.ly/1G7VxjM> •

“Groundwater depletion the world over poses a far greater threat to global water security than is currently acknowledged. Groundwater — the water stored beneath Earth's surface in soil and porous rock aquifers — accounts for as much as 33 percent of total water withdrawals worldwide. Over two billion people rely on groundwater as their primary water source, while half or more of the irrigation water used to grow the world's food is supplied from underground sources.”

“Groundwater also acts as the key strategic reserve in times of drought, [as] in the western United States, northeastern Brazil, and Australia. Like money in the bank, groundwater sustains societies through the lean times of little incoming rain and snow.

“The irony of groundwater is that despite its critical importance to global water supplies, it attracts insufficient management attention relative to surface water supplies in rivers and reservoirs. In many regions around the world, groundwater is often poorly monitored and managed [or] oversight is often non-existent.

“The result [is] ... groundwater is being pumped at far greater rates than it can be naturally replenished, so that many of the largest aquifers on most continents are being mined, their precious contents never to be returned.”

For more see *Mother Jones*, October 30, 2014, “These maps of California's water shortage are terrifying,” by Tom Philpott, <http://bit.ly/1G7VhRT>

(World continues on next page)

A planet of suburbs

The Economist, December 6, 2014

<http://econ.st/1IlwxGN> • “The world is becoming ever more suburban, and the better for it.” Here are some tidbits from a most interesting 5400-word essay.

“Suburbs are curious places. They have been around since ancient Rome (which gave the world the word), but it was not until the 19th and 20th centuries that first the train and then the bus and car brought them truly into their own. To Lewis Mumford, writing in 1961, suburbs were not just unfortunate urban appendages; they were anti-urban. They were machineries of isolation...

“Those who argue that suburbia is dying are wrong on the facts; those who say it is doomed by the superiority of higher-density life make a far from convincing case.

Outside scruffy **Chennai** (in southeast India and once called Madras), “a new India is rising — spreading less because its inhabitants are desperate to leave the old city than because their jobs have moved. Carmakers have built factories outside the city, and workers have followed. Information technology has grown to the south...

“Few places on Earth are as suburban as **Phoenix**. Apart from a handful of office blocks, Phoenix seldom rises above three stories, and much of it does not rise above one... One of the biggest, oldest, and poorest suburban developments in America is Maryvale, in Phoenix. Built at great speed in the 1950s, it is now home to around 200,000. It has a dismal reputation. Three-bedroom houses can be bought there for less than \$100,000. Yet the people who moved out of Maryvale did not pile into the city center; they went to newer, more distant suburbs. And the district’s new Mexican inhabitants are probably better off than they would be crammed into tower blocks.

“**Croydon** was a town until London engulfed it in the early 20th century. In the 1960s and 70s, local officials promoted it as a site for office towers, a cheap back-office site for central London firms. The boom did not last... Croydon’s decline partly reflects the astonishing revival of inner London. Croydon’s old office blocks are being converted into apartments for people who will commute to the city center. And rising rents in inner London are pushing out the poor. No American city has centralized to anything like the same degree...

“The pleasant character of many inner-city areas is partly a consequence of decades-ago sprawl. If the masses had been unable to move out of crowded urban districts, those places would never have become appealing to middle-class settlers. And, as suburbs come to seem more urban, the distinction between central cities and their suburbs is blurring. In time, the two may be almost impossible to tell apart...”

Some UK cities look like American sprawl

The Economist, November 22, 2014

<http://econ.st/1vQoz53> • “Britain’s largest cities are centralizing. Smaller ones are doing the opposite. When Sheffield Town Hall opened in 1897, it was a symbol of pride in a city on a Victorian growth spurt. Now it stands lost in an urban wasteland. A 13-shop stretch along a nearby high street includes six empty buildings, five temporary shops, and a clothing store selling everything for under \$16. A mere 15-minute tram ride out of the city reveals lit-up office blocks where workers jog on treadmills in ground-floor gyms, beside a buzzing shopping center. At 5:30 pm, the ground floor of a department store in the mall is more densely populated than Sheffield’s entire central high street.

“Britain’s cities are falling either side of a divide. A few — mainly the big ones — are growing at the core and faltering towards the edge. But most of Britain’s towns and cities are doing precisely the opposite: the action is on the outskirts. If London is getting more like Paris, these towns increasingly resemble America’s sprawling cities, such as Cleveland and Houston.

“One explanation is that the economies of scale when businesses cluster are getting more important as the economy shifts towards high-tech and finance. Information-sharing and networking work best over a small area. City centers that managed to reach a certain density of these businesses will now continue to attract more of them; those that did not will thin out, falling prey to a range of powerful economic and social forces.”

(World continues on next page)

2014 from above. Twelve “powerful, beautiful, and chilling satellite images,” including my favorites: Independence Square, Kiev, Ukraine (protests, February 24) and Henan coal plant, China. —Will Oremus and Lisa Larson-Walker, <http://slate.me/1qye44a>

A year's daily photos show Beijing's smog

CityLab, November 19, 2014

James West, <http://bit.ly/1y5epwv> • “During the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Beijing [November 7-11], the toxic gray air turned ‘APEC blue.’ [To accomplish this,] 10,000 industrial plants were temporarily shuttered, and nearly 40,000 others limited operating hours. An army of 434,000 staff and

officials from provinces surrounding Beijing were called up to inspect the plants and enforce the order. But now that APEC is over, so is APEC blue.

“To get a real sense of just how bad the air is in Beijing most of the time, check out this extraordinary series of photos taken by one Beijing man, Yi Zou Zou. Since the beginning of 2013, he took photos of the Beijing Television Station building and surrounding sky every day from his apartment and uploaded them to his personal Weibo account (the rough equivalent of Twitter).”

The result for 365 days is shown here, along with a one-month collage for October 2014. Photos from weibo.com/u/1000481815



Is China really going green?

The New Yorker, November 15, 2014

John Cassidy, <http://nry.kr/1oYPzME> • “For the first time, there appears to be the possibility of a successor to the Kyoto treaty that would encompass developed and developing nations. China’s change of heart is a big deal. But what lies behind it? And it is for real?”

“The shift isn’t as sudden as it appears. In addition to putting up new coal-fired plants, they invested heavily in nuclear, wind, hydroelectric, and solar power. The government set a target of 10 per cent for the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources in 2010. Four years later, it has just about reached the target, meaning it supplies about the same share of its energy needs with renewables as the United States

does. And the Chinese government had already raised its goal for renewables to 15 per cent of its total energy needs by 2020.

“To help reach this target, the country is investing heavily in alternative-energy. Last year alone [China] installed twelve gigawatts’ worth of solar panels — about equal to all the solar capacity in the United States.

“It’s not that the Chinese have downgraded economic growth. What’s different is [that] more of the country’s growth will come from industries that don’t use energy so intensively, such as health care and entertainment. And that will be what enables China to combine rapid economic development with lower carbon emissions.” ■

the sometimes unseen loyalties that stitch a city together. [Jones's 2003 novel, *The Known World*, received the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. —Ed.]

***I Sailed With Magellan* by Stuart Dybek**

Featured city: Chicago

Dybek — the man who has become something of the bard of Chicago — chronicles life in the city's South Side in the 1950s and 60s by following the life of Perry Katzek through corner bars, Catholic schools, VFW halls, and Lake Michigan beaches. The episodic structure gives the book the feeling of elegy and memory association, reminding readers about how our deepest understanding of cities is not shaped by chronological cause-and-effect and precise history, but by peculiar emotional resonances.

***Berlin: City of Stones* by Jason Lutes**

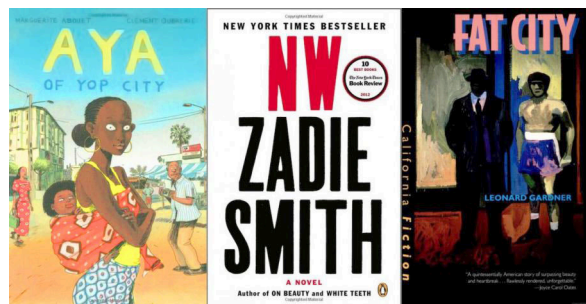
Featured city: Berlin

Opening in Berlin in September 1928, *City of Stones* follows an ensemble cast as they navigate life in the last years of the Weimar Republic — a time of jazz and art for some; a time of darkening political tensions and long-term unemployment for others. A journalist, an art student, and many others are living in a city that is undergoing a tectonic shift — and even those in denial must face up to it on the bloody May Day of 1929. *City of Stones* is a collection of 16 individually published comics, and reads as a graphic novel. Lutes is particularly adept at revealing how a city in upheaval is experienced differently by adults and children, the rich and poor, the artists and workers. The second part of the still-unfolding Berlin trilogy is told in *Berlin: City of Smoke* — it, too, is a must-read.

***Aya* by Marguerite Abouet;
illustrated by Clément Oubrerie**

Featured city: Berlin

Abouet has said that she began to write the *Aya* graphic novels — this one is the first in an informal series — because she was frustrated with the limited portrayal of cities in Africa. Pictured as places of war and famine, she saw literature's failure to capture the humor and daily rhythms that she remembered from her own childhood in Côte d'Ivoire. In *Aya*, she brings us to Yop City in 1978, a sunny working-class city in West Africa that brims with youthful energy, infatuation, and promise. The story follows our 19-year-old heroine and her friends as they learn what it means to become an adult in this city. *Aya* is a light-hearted and charming story — hardly a dense portrait of urban life. But that makes it perhaps all the more revealing.



***Fat City* by Leonard Gardner**

Featured city: Stockton, California

This isn't your usual sports story, full of melodrama and slow-motion heroics. *Fat City* focuses on the tension of work, dreams, and the everyday drabness of two young boxers in Stockton, California in 1969, one in his late teens, the other turning 30. As Joan Didion wrote, Gardner got Stockton "exactly right" in his only novel — "the hanging around gas stations, the field dust, the relentless oppressiveness of the weather, the bleak liaisons sealed on the levees and Greyhound buses..." Both the big-dreaming boxers and the city are rife with contradictions — people say what they don't mean, hope for what they don't want, and create realities out of what isn't true. In the portrayal of small-time bouts, cheap hotels, and day labor in the fields and orchards, the city of Stockton emerges with diamond-sharp clarity.

***Invisible Cities* by Italo Calvino;
translated by William Weaver**

Featured city: Various

This modern classic is constructed as a dialogue between Marco Polo and the aging emperor Kublai Khan, where the explorer is describing the 55 extraordinary (and imaginary) cities that he visited on his journeys. Each vignette portrays a different city, taking the grandest ideas of city design and urban theory, and pushing them to the extreme. Octavia, for example, is a city made of spider webs, suspended above an abyss and supported by an abyss that can't possibly last — echoing the dilemma of real cities made fragile by a changing climate. Armilla is a city of pipes: Its buildings lack floors, ceilings or walls, foreshadowing the postmodern trends in architecture. With its imaginative force, and the unsettling ambivalence about whether Marco Polo is describing distinct cities or different ways of looking at Venice, it's no surprise that *Invisible Cities* is a favorite in design courses.

(continued on next page)

NW by Zadie Smith

Featured city: London

The title of this polyphonic novel signals the postal code for North-West London, where our four leading characters intersect. Specifically, they all come from a fictional housing project called Caldwell, which has five towers that are each named for an English philosopher: Hobbes, Locke, and so on. Smith takes readers through the multicultural stew of modern London by way of its parks, alleyways, apartments, offices, and sidewalks. Written with a mix of points-of-view and styles (screenplay, narrative, stream-of-consciousness, lists, directions), the novel feels expansive and without a center, rather like the city itself — especially for those who live on its dusty margins. Few novels penetrate the inner workings of a city's class systems — especially its opportunities and limitations for mobility — as well as NW. As James Wood put in the *New Yorker*, “Smith is a great urban realist.”

them by Joyce Carol Oates

Featured city: Detroit and Grosse Pointe, Michigan

Winner of the National Book Award [for Fiction in 1970], *them* is a multi-generational novel that spans the 1930s through the 1967 riot in Detroit. We follow the Wendell family — Loretta and her children, Jules and Maureen — as they attempt to carve out space for themselves in an urban landscape of cyclical poverty and abuse. Southwest and downtown Detroit are especially featured here, at a time when the city had only just barely passed its peak as an economic power. With agility, Oates traces how the moneyed city overlaps with its high-pressure neighborhoods. (The novel was initially titled “Love and Money.”) Here, people are beginning to believe that the only way to bring about social change in their city is to overthrow it all.

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“Boom times and cities. ‘I find the presence of so much of the tech industry in San Francisco to be reassuring. The idea that technology and reality reinforce each other is a good one,’ Goldberger said. As for local concerns about the current tech-spawned migration of people and money our way, ‘Everybody should be so lucky as to have that as their problem.’ ... For Goldberger, the larger culprit in all this is the withering of federal aid for mixed-income housing during the past 30 years: ‘Society has to decide that it wants this to happen... We’re at the risk of losing the diversity that is essential to the appeal of cities.’” —John King, on a conversation between Paul Goldberger and Jack Dorsey.

<http://bit.ly/1rlmmAp>

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