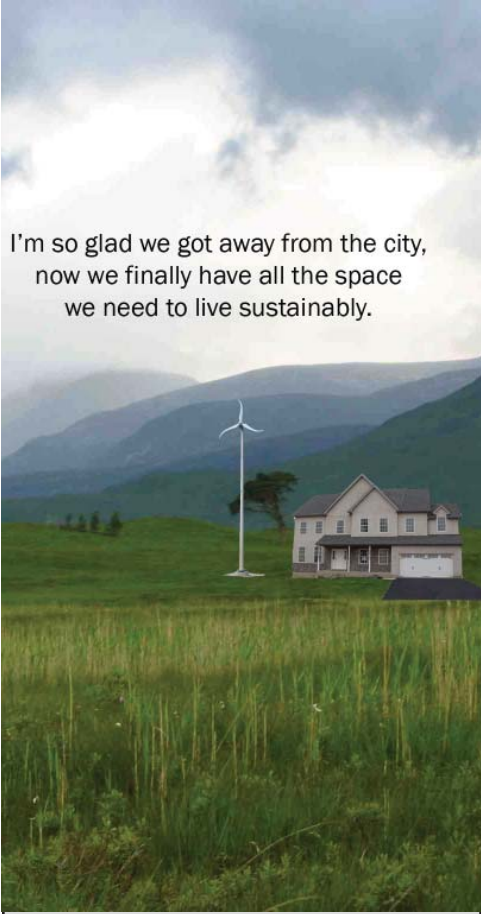


2010

ARCH 510 GRADUATE SEMINAR DESIGNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

STUDENT EDITORIALS

FALL 2010



I'm so glad we got away from the city,
now we finally have all the space
we need to live sustainably.

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OLD BUILDING—NEW LIFE	KATHRYN WALLACE RUEGSEGGER

*Thanks to the graduate students in Arch 510 who
wrote, peer edited, rewrote, peer edited, rewrote,
... these editorials.*



THERE IS SOLITUDE TO BE FOUND

Perspectives of your outlook upon a tangible or intangible entity can be said to be comprised. I took an interest with a program offered by the University of Idaho that deals with how we can interpret both the tangible and intangible into our own perspectives. I love the idea that any thought that forms in my mind, can be extended in a way that can be interpreted by others. After all, the idea behind debates is not about being right or wrong, but rather inviting your ‘opponent’ to see as much from your point of view as possible. I believe in holding debates in this fashion, by weaving imagery with the use of words in order to open up the doors in a person’s mind and show them a picture of what I see.

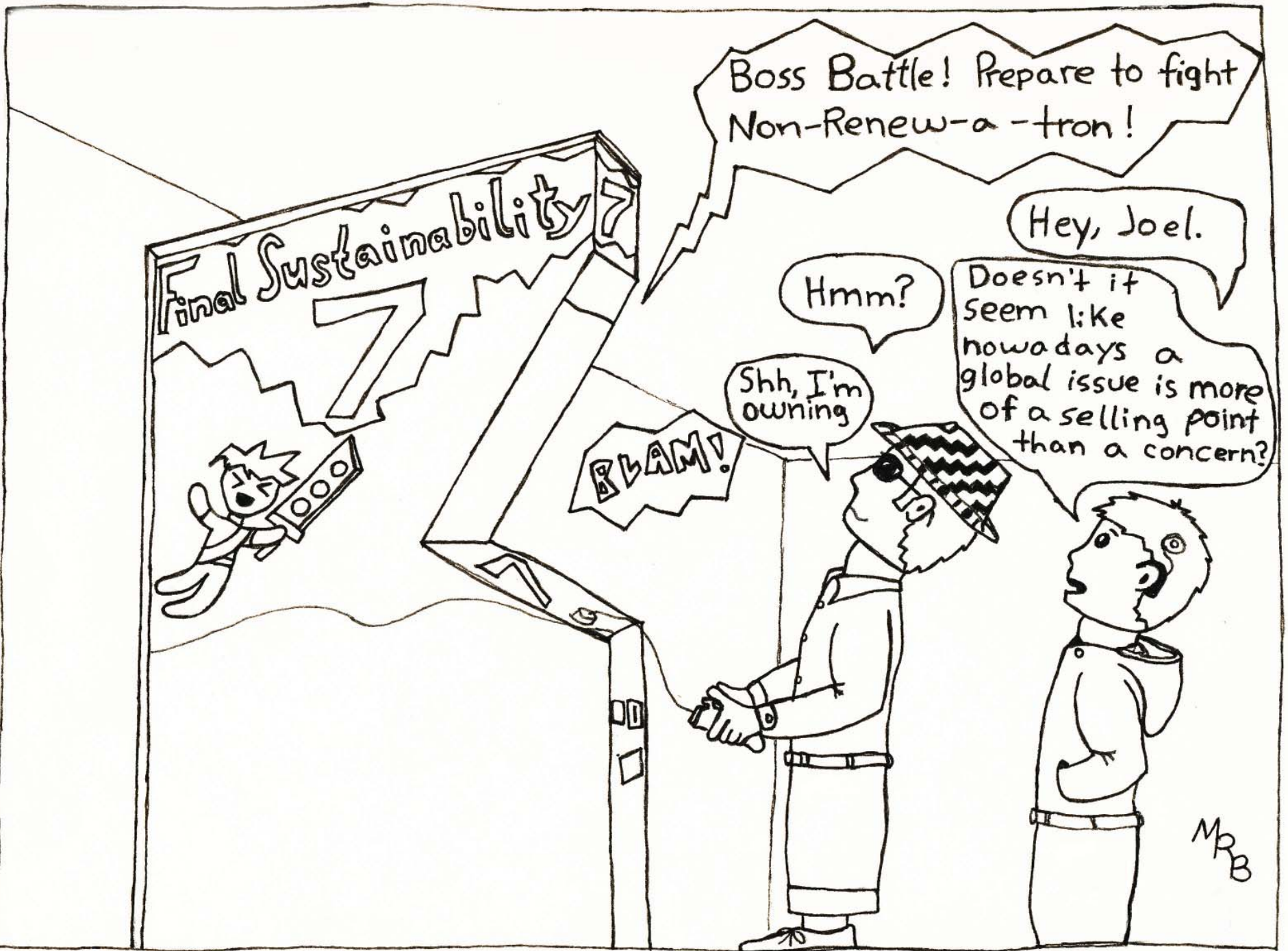
I mention perspectives because this view is altogether different from one of our most common errors, assumptions. When we meet a person for the first time, we automatically assume things about that person despite of what we may or may not have known beforehand. When an incident occurs, we assume that news reporters are accurate in their stories or that ‘researchers from such and such laboratory’ released ground breaking data that we can trust. Of course, it is easy to fall prey to the opposite spectrum and believe all reported information is ill-researched data. I value perspective as being the most interesting underlying foundation of all communications because it makes me feel as though I can walk away from a discussion feeling like I have grown from the experience.

Even now, it is quite obvious to me that I experience an opportunity unique from most everyone else in any room I occupy. I do not see my near lack of natural hearing as a ‘loss’ or a ‘disability’ (for how can you miss something if you don’t remember ever having it?), but rather as an advantage for one with my experiences. I possess instantaneous silence at any time of my choosing, programmable hearing settings for various occasions (battle of the band concerts, private dinners, noisy airplane cabins), and even the ability to listen to music via a headphone that transmits wirelessly directly into my brain.

Assumptions open way to disappointment, and even to dangerous misunderstandings. It is impossible not to have assumptions, but keeping an open mind will surely change the assumptions almost every time. I mention this because I am used to not catching every word ever said. I also have the habit of hearing something completely different from what was actually said. This can make the difference of knowing if I wanted Korean or Thai food, or if Green Beans like glue.

I value an open mind, and a keen interest in learning about all the different views of reality everyone has. At times, the world I live in becomes noisily chaotic and rather confusing. I have to rely upon getting myself out of tight spots to avoid awkward misunderstanding, which can be a test on other’s patience. When things begin to be overwhelming and screaming for attention I can get lost. However, with the ease in which I can shroud myself in silence, there is Solitude to be found.

—Matthew Bassett



Boss Battle! Prepare to fight Non-Renew-a-tron!

Hey, Joel.

Hmm?

Doesn't it seem like nowadays a global issue is more of a selling point than a concern?

Shh, I'm owning

BLAM!

MRB



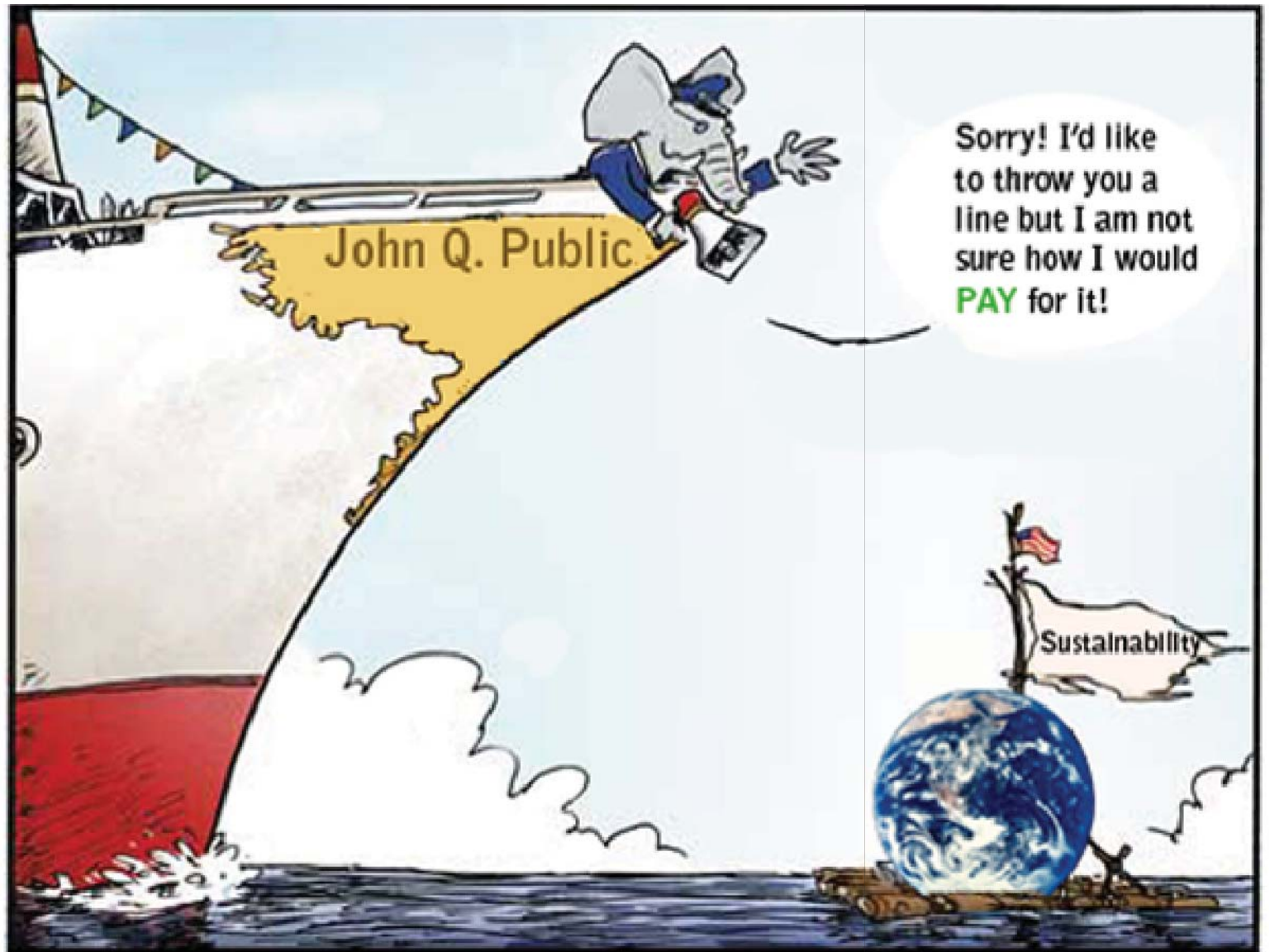
TOWARD URBAN COMMUNITY

I grew up in small town America—very small town America, where the population was less than 3,000 and my high school graduating class was 24. I was raised in a large Basque family that ran a sheep ranch. My entire family have been ranchers for my whole life. My family has always lived in a country setting with few neighbors. We have long since been the suppliers of food to the masses. I grew up in a very rural setting and appreciate open country greatly; I also appreciate what it takes to run a ranch and be able to eat farm fresh food and enjoy the great outdoors.

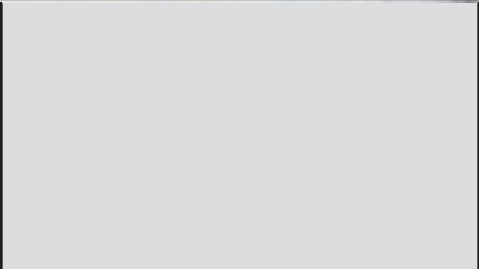
My grandparents and their parents have long since died and passed their ranches and customs on to my parents. Recently, my family's ranch has been encircled by rural sprawl. As it becomes increasingly harder for the mama and papa ranch to stay afloat, more and more family establishments, such as my families, are forced to sell their land and move on. Their land is gobbled up by developers who subdivide the land into two acre plots. Then, the developers build one poor-quality house in the middle of each scrap of land with no regard for the site. This practice is quite problematic on several fronts. First, it is a complete waste of land. The homes are situated in the center of the plot requiring a road across the new land, making the left over space unsuitable for farming or ranching. There is no amount of food that can be grown on two acres that will benefit enough people to be worth the trouble. It could feed the inhabitants of that one house but not much more and those multiple plots of two acres would serve a large farm better than a private person. Secondly, all the people living in these homes do not work the land or raise livestock, so they must drive to their places of employment. Many of these homes are located 30-60 minutes away from their work places and have multiple members of the families driving multiple vehicles into town on a regular basis for work, school, groceries, and more. Thirdly, these families are completely separated from any real community setting and have no connection to their neighbors. This isolation also creates problems for the ranchers and farmers. The ranchers and farmers now have people surrounding their land on all sides—people who often complain about tractors and farm equipment running at 5:00 a.m. too near their homes and who squabble over water and land rights. Really, the list of problems that this situation creates is endless. It is a huge problem that will not go away if we cannot change.

Here, in America, we have a lot of land. We also have a large population that requires a lot of resources. We cannot afford to waste this much land just so that every single family can have two acres of lawn. Personally, I believe our country is going to require a new type of zoning that protects enough land to grow the food and resources we will require as our population increases. Here, in America, we tend to do things just because we can. We believe it is our right to live where we want and own as much land as we want without regard for any one else. But, rural America should be saved for the creation of food and for community recreation spaces, while our cities are reserved and designed for the people to live together in communities. I firmly believe that the only people that should live in rural America are those who are providing food for the masses. Every one else should live in an urban setting, but not just any urban setting—an urban setting that is not 'driven' by the automobile, but by forms of community/mass transit. Where the needs of the many take precedent over the needs of the few or the rich. I truly believe that if we, as a human race, are going to thrive, it has to be a collective venture that is based on equality, not capitalism or consumerism. We have to remember that we are all human and part of a greater ecosystem, which we don't even completely understand yet. No matter what race, religion, or tax bracket—we are all in this together and we can win together or we can lose together, but we must at least try. We owe that much to our future generations.

—Amy Browne-Minden



Sorry! I'd like to throw you a line but I am not sure how I would **PAY** for it!





INVESTING IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

OPTIMIZING BUILDING AND USER PERFORMANCE

Comparison of Green School Designs vs. Conventional School Designs and Effects on Human Performance and Productivity

In America today, many students, particularly low-income students, have not received the education they deserve. Children are born into a certain demographic area or zip-code and remain in that area and never have the opportunity to realize their potential due to poverty and a re-occurring cycle of dropout rates, poor health, and nutrition, and in some cases, unqualified teachers. In many instances school facilities are inadequate and can contribute to these pressing social issues. How can I begin to tap into solutions that may improve such statistics and cycles? Reflecting on these unfortunate circumstances, I looked into the effects architecture has on student and teacher productivity and performance, and how the built environment plays a critical role to some of these success factors. Some of my research includes a brief comparison regarding conventional public school designs and sustainable green school buildings. According to the Center for Ecoliteracy, “Building green schools is more fiscally prudent and lower risk than continuing to build unhealthy, inefficient schools.” Why then do we continue to build schools of poor design? Is it due to the cheaper cost up front? Numerous people complain that green practices are initially too costly to afford; however, some studies show that through appropriate design considerations and implementation, investments in green schools (and green strategies) pay off in the long run.

How can people become more aware of the long-term benefits of green school designs and their impact, not only on student performance and health, but also on the environment we live in? A study entitled, “Greening America’s Schools: Costs and Benefits,” entailed a comprehensive analysis of 30 green schools built in ten different states between the years of 2001 and 2006. Some of the key points include: Green school construction costs only 2% more than construction of conventional schools; Schools save money with lower energy and water costs, improved teacher retention, and lower health costs. Green schools use less energy as there is more efficient lighting, greater use of daylighting and sensors, and more efficient heating and cooling systems. Students miss less school due to improved air quality and overall health. And Green schools show a 3–5 percent improvement in learning ability and test scores (Ecoliteracy). This study is just one among many conducted, that reflects the importance of the built environment and its affect on human beings’ health, performance, and productivity.

Use of Existing Facilities to Serve Community Need

If conventional schools can begin to invest in their facilities for long term results and become more responsive to environmental issues, more people will be willing to invest in green schools. However, how are such changes implemented when a school is already constructed and in use? Choices to tear down, redesign, or rebuild are all potential solutions. However, it is important to use the existing facilities and to work with them to our best potential. In many cases it is cost beneficial, it is good for the environment as you have the ability to recycle materials and resources, and you can keep that historic framework of the structure. In America today, so much of our land is being built upon with new construction and developments. Where do we draw the line to preserve open space in our surroundings? We need to take a look around our cities and communities to see the potential for a new beginning with buildings of our past that need our attention and consideration to serve user’s needs more effectively.

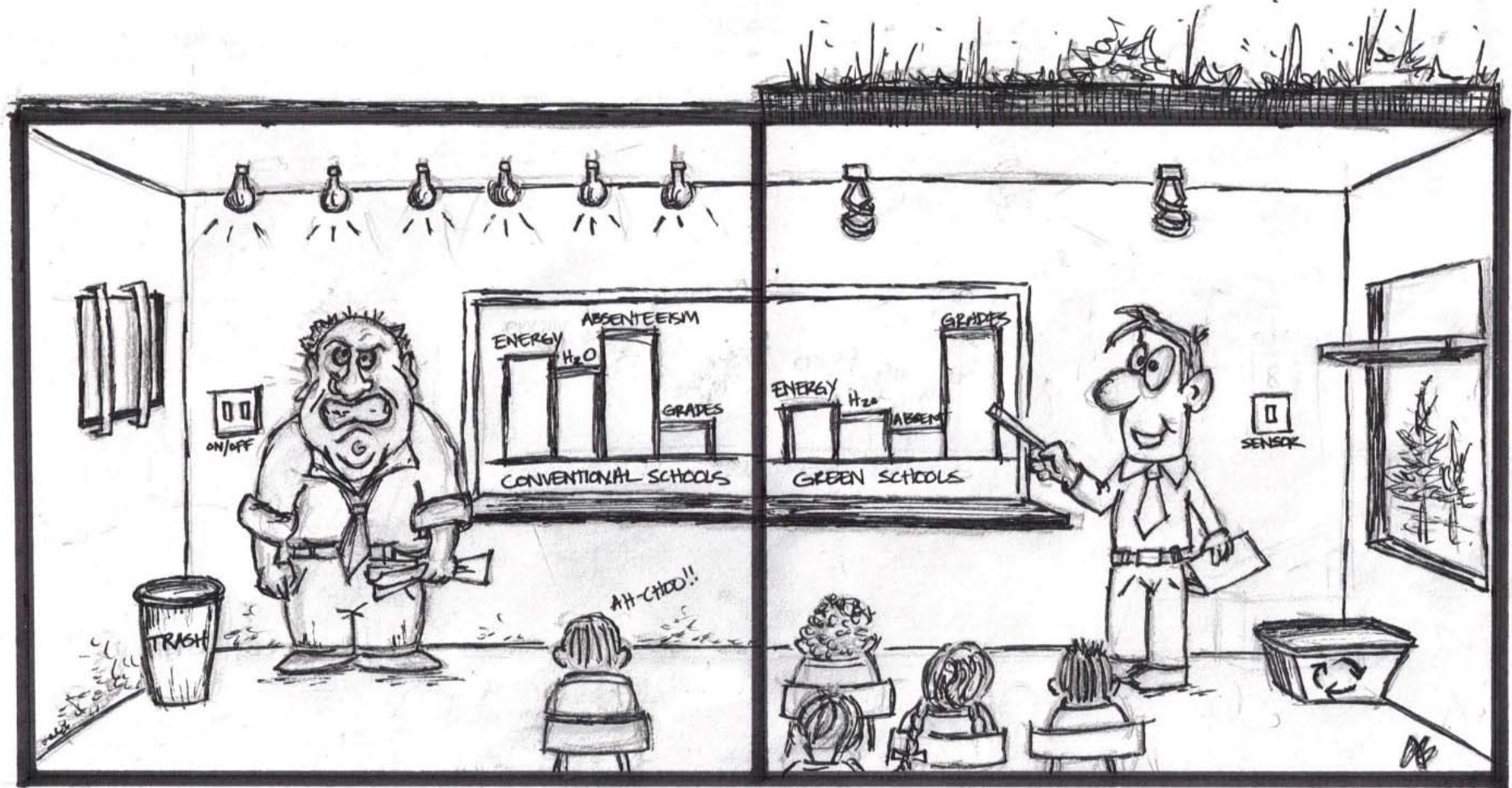
Responding to Community Needs for Appropriate Implementation

When considering the benefits of using existing structures within our communities, it is important to respond appropriately to the community’s needs for changes to the building, for needed programmatic spaces, and for the type of community icon to be established. Without surveying the community, how can designers be successful? Community input is invaluable to the success of a project and to ensure that the final outcome will be used to its fullest potential, that community members will support the project, and that in the end the building will be a substantial and needed improvement from previous conditions. Flexibility is critical as community opinions are diverse, and a wide range of uses may be needed.

Moving Forward with the Project

To conclude, some of the key features for the Sandy High School Redesign and Renovation Project will include improvements in facilities to increase student/worker productivity, thus creating a building that teaches it's users the importance of sustainable life practices; to use the embodied energy of the existing structure using the resources we have rather than building on open land; to respond appropriately to community needs through input in the decision-making process; and in creating a building model that will effectively convey the community's identity for future generations.

—Jessica Buhler





BROKEN PIECES

HOW ARCHITECTURE AS A VOCATION HAS FRACTURED AND AFFECTED THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Architecture in the twentieth century may have fallen victim to the cultural context it entered. Architecture is a powerful profession which has the ability to shape conventional ideas and challenge beliefs, but architecture is also a service and eventually produces the values which are demanded by the clientele. In the twentieth century the legacy of the industrial revolution had stratified society into even smaller niches than was experienced at the outset of the industrial revolution in the mid nineteenth century. The effects of economic incentives in present day society force people into more specialized roles in the economy. A person ceases to generalize and narrows in on a chosen vocation.

Take as an example, our history of architecture over the past two centuries. Some architectural philosophers such as Le Corbusier in his book *Towards an Architecture* suggested that architecture as a profession is dying, to be replaced by the field of engineering as a response to witnessing the architect assume a smaller and smaller role in society. This is not the case. Architecture traditionally was the job of designing and overseeing building projects—the master builder. The need for this service has not gone away. However, architecture has splintered into a variety of more narrowly focused careers—civil engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, construction management, and interior design—fields that have splintered from architecture as a result of the growing complexity of the field. Architecture as a profession has mimicked the overall trends in our culture to focus, specialize, and narrow in the interest of producing a product which fully takes advantage of the technological advancements of society.

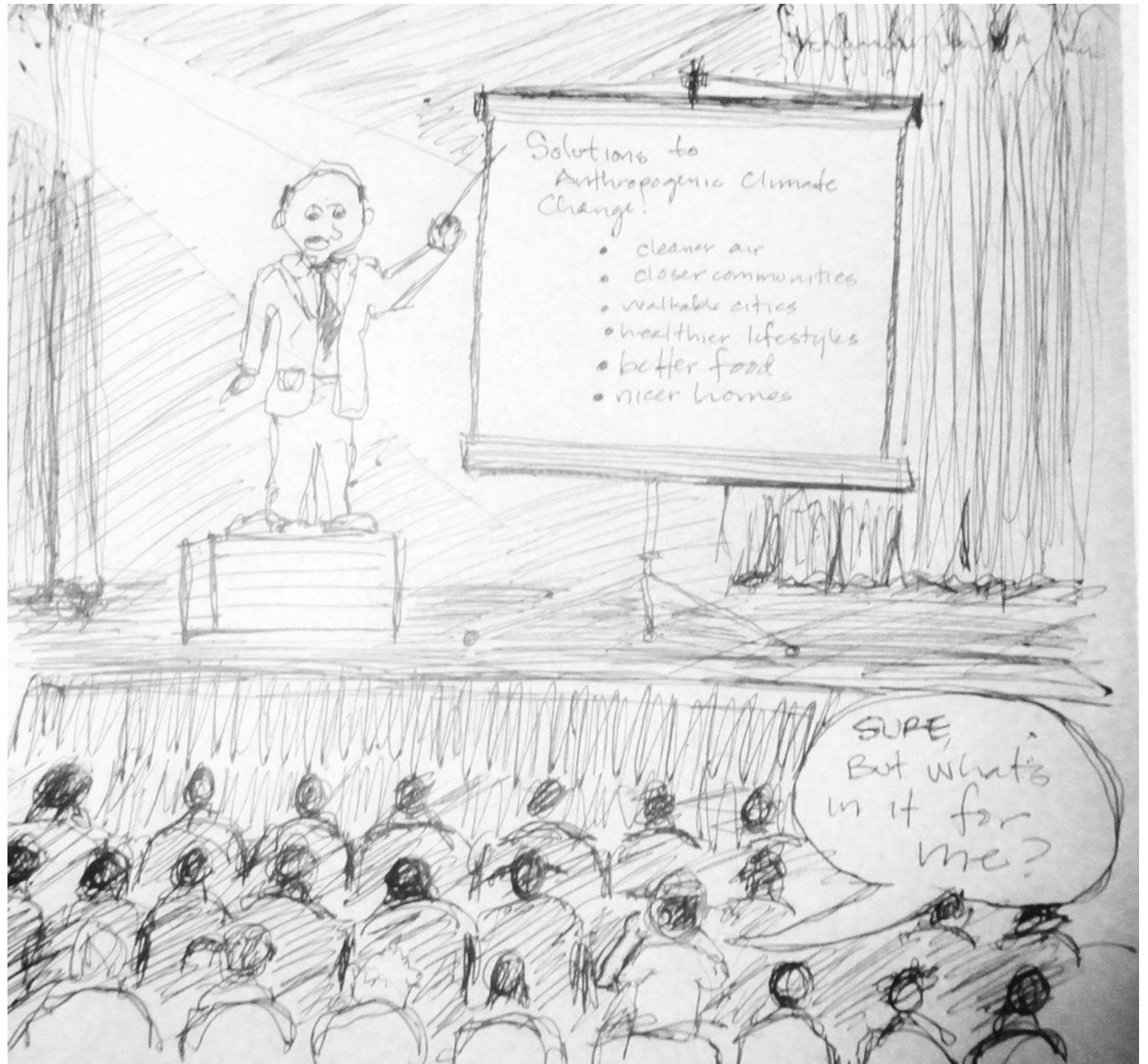
At no time in history have buildings incorporated the same quantity of systems in their design. Each system requires a separate solution from a separate expert. The failure to incorporate these systems into one simple and eloquent whole is the failure of a single person rising to the challenge of accountability. A project is handed from owner to project manager, to architect, to engineer, to contractor, and then back to the owner, who is left with no lasting relationship with the architect or massive design team and consequently no real knowledge of how his building is maintained or operated until it entropies and is inevitably demolished and replaced by another temporary fix. These issues are recognizable in many fields of building; from commercial to residential, to industrial. No single person knows the extent of solutions to all issues expressed in these projects. The natural instinct of any planning official overseeing them is to divide and conquer; to segregate the different construction types into independent zones, which they may be seen individually. This is the scientific impulse of our information age market, to dissect a whole in order to examine its parts. This strategy has an unfortunate effect of exerting far greater costs on the environment, the economy, and the culture than at first may be anticipated.

A built environment that is responsive to our culture's needs must incorporate a building strategy that aims at integrating various systems and building types into one functional and beautiful whole. This strategy must exceed conventional zoning policies, which divide land into parceled pieces of an immense whole, and must aim at integrating smaller, more human, pieces. This strategy must overcome centuries of design assumptions that have treated human commerce as a sterile machine that could be shattered into its various attributes and have rational order imposed with ruthless authoritarianism. This argument is central to the divide between the philosophies of reductivism and phenomenology; reductivism on one side, attempting to splinter our culture and reduce human existence to the sum of its parts, and phenomenology on the other, the philosophy of our true comprehension and pleasure of existence.

Communication must flow among fields of design, work, and business in our century. Most importantly, people must be treated with humanity and their environments must reflect their unique character and needs. Architecture mimics culture, so over the past century this aping has meant an era of psychological and spiritual repression, which prioritizes gross national products over beautiful personal fulfillment. In this century the architect must lead the way in bringing the divisive technologies of our age under control of the human impulse which commands our efforts to desegregate the built environment.

The solution, mixed-use planning, seems a bit of an understatement.

—Andy Carman





BRINGING LIFE BACK TO DOWNTOWN

With the advent of automobiles we have seen the decline of our historic downtowns in the past century. In light of this decline we have to ask ourselves a myriad of questions, foremost among them, what have we lost? Are small suburban residential areas with long driving distances to and from work, entertainment, shopping, or restaurants giving us something better than what we had when we lived in our cities? Examining these questions, it becomes apparent that we have definitely lost something, and that it is something for which we long, and we will often travel hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles to visit.

Idaho Falls started out as Taylors Crossing, a bridge to cross the Snake River. As the outpost grew into what is now a city something was formed, loved, and then slowly became neglected—the downtown.

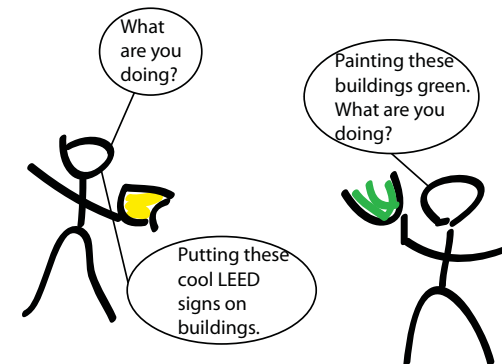
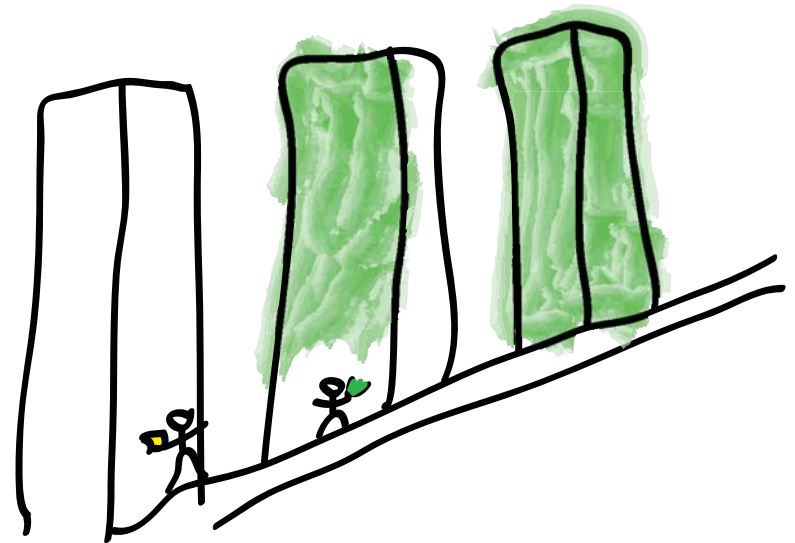
The downtown was once where everything happened. There were large department stores, small shops, restaurants, hotels, and activities. There were also people who lived there—shop owners above their stores, and houses within walking distance. In short, there was a thriving community. There was life. This vitality doesn't exist anymore; there aren't any large department stores, few businesses are open after five, no strong restaurants to visit, and no window shoppers, which all leads to a desolate downtown.

Now there are only small businesses that open at eight and close at five. When five o'clock rolls around and workers leave, downtown is left to contemplate its yesteryear when activity continued deep into the night.

What happened? People still love their downtowns. In travelling even a little everyone finds themselves entranced by the classic downtown where activity continues without stop. People will often travel great distances to cities famous for their downtowns. A classic downtown is something that every city really could have, and many cities have been able to survive simply because they have a downtown that still embraces and cherishes their pasts. Many of these culturally rich downtowns have over the years developed traditions and character which the whole population of the city and large numbers of tourists enjoy and celebrate. Doesn't every city want to have more to celebrate?

By taking the buildings in downtown districts that are falling into disrepair and restoring their lost integrity, we can again awaken our cities. Having people living, working, and playing in the downtown district will create an increased demand for services in those districts, in turn making them the place to be. The community life of yesteryear is not so far gone that we cannot reclaim it today.

—Greg Croft



LIVING IN CITIES

As of 2008, more than 50% of the world's population was declared to be living in urban settings. This is good news for those who believe in urbanization, but I am skeptical and don't know if the United States is ready to handle a large influx of people back into the urban core. Poor public transportation options, undesirable living conditions, and lack of green space and amenities are all reasons for people to desire suburban conditions. People in the United States, especially in the west, feel an entitlement to "their own space" which, admittedly, they can't get in large cities. While I feel some cities are making strides in the right direction, using Portland's walkable city blocks, adequate green space and workable transit system as a prime example, large cities outside of the United States, generally, have the mind set and infrastructural set up to handle regions of density. An examination of China's population would show a condensed understanding of personal space while Europeans live in cities cultivated ages ago with ancient historical contexts based around multi-use habitation. With close inspection of outside regions, we can start to see radical differences in approaches to city planning. In today's U.S. cities, however, a new approach needs to be taken towards development and renovation. How do we, as designers, draw people back into the cities? Three main issues need to be addressed; 1. personal space and safety 2. adequate public transportation 3. access to amenities.

In regards to each of these issues, I ask three pertinent questions:

Personal Space and Safety. How do you tell someone who lives on two acres of land in a 3,000 sq. ft. home that they now have to live in a high rise apartment complex with neighbors and no yard?

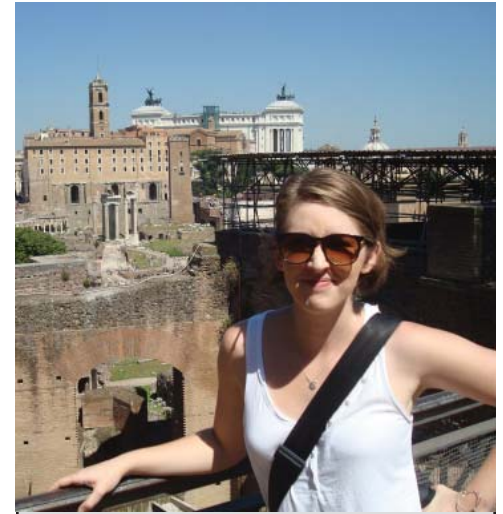
Public Transportation. Why take a two hour bus ride when you can get there in your car in half an hour?

Access to Amenities. Is it feasible to expect the population to decrease its dependency on vehicular transportation methods when they have to travel 10 miles to buy groceries or to get to work?

In response to these questions, my basic, simple, and maybe even naïve retort would be, "Let's provide urban centers with adequate green space. Let's do our best to create a content population which will inevitably subdue unrest and create safe neighborhoods in dense situations. And, if we're asking people to reduce their dependency on vehicular transportation we have to make other transportation options just as easy to use and we have to provide appropriate amenities within the urban condition and not as an edge condition."

People in the United States have legitimate grounds for not wanting to live in large cities. I can understand their abandonment of the urban core. For at least sixty years the suburban option has been providing a very enticing argument and I don't blame people for wanting a "better" life style, but I think it's time for people to migrate back into cities in an effort to sustain future life on this planet. We can build as sustainable as green can get, but I think that consolidating populations into a more dense fabric will ultimately be the saving grace of our world. On our current path as our population grows, our farm lands decrease, our ability to feed ourselves decreases, and our ability to feed ourselves decreases, our dependency on other nations increases. So, as designers, I feel that it is our moral obligation to do everything in our power to ensure a self-sustaining and prosperous environment for the generations that follow us.

—Amanda Green





COMMUTING DECISIONS

There is an old belief that people won't ever change. For the most part I believe this assertion is true. The only case where it is not true is when something is made more convenient or is improved. Members of the human race, for the most part, look to satisfy themselves personally before everything else. In the United States, our capitalist culture has instilled in us the idea of doing things quick, cheap, and easy. This concept works fine if quality and sustainability are not accounted for. Unfortunately, until recent years, sustainable decisions and outcomes were not even close to the first priority. When attempting to solve problems, we as a people do not try to actually solve the problem, we just place a temporary patch on the problem and wait for it to break. Rather than using a few more resources and foresight to better plan for the future we choose the cheap and easy fix which, in the end, leads to more problems.

Transit plans in the Bay Area are a great example of not using foresight and resources to solve a problem that could have easily solved with cohesive master planning and execution. When thinking of transportation in the Bay Area two words come to mind—eclectic and hectic. Transportation in the Bay Area includes personal automobile travel, two large scale train routes, light rails, trolleys, taxis, and number of different types of buses. When commuting from city-to-city in the Bay Area, an individual will typically use three, if not more, of these forms of transit in one trip.

When traveling on these multiple forms of transportation, one clear observation can be made. The majority of people using public transit make less than the average income. This means that the riders can afford public transportation more easily than the cost associated with purchasing and maintaining an automobile. Individuals that choose to drive, do so because public transportation is inefficient and inconvenient when compared with the automobile. Due to the fact that most of the general population does not believe in an environmental crisis, it is necessary for us as designers to develop systems that make daily tasks easier and more convenient for the average citizen. I would bet that at least 90 percent of the individuals using public transportation do so because it is less expensive than driving. However, depending on the situation, it might not even be that large of a cost difference. Purchasing passes for several types of transportation routes can quickly become costly. Given the choice, an individual will take a quicker trip and pay the extra money, especially during commuting times.

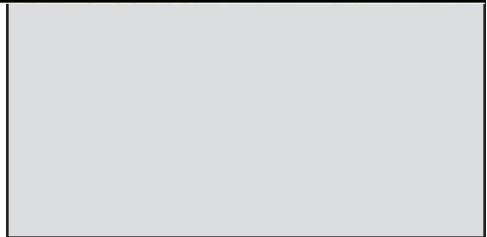
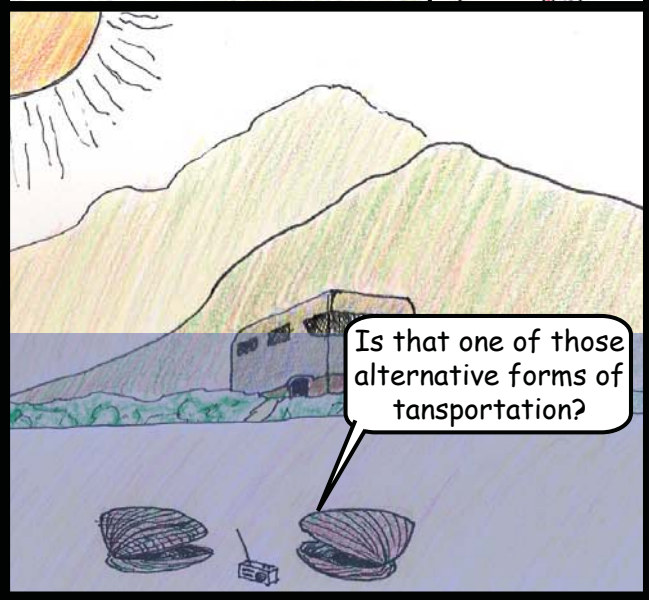
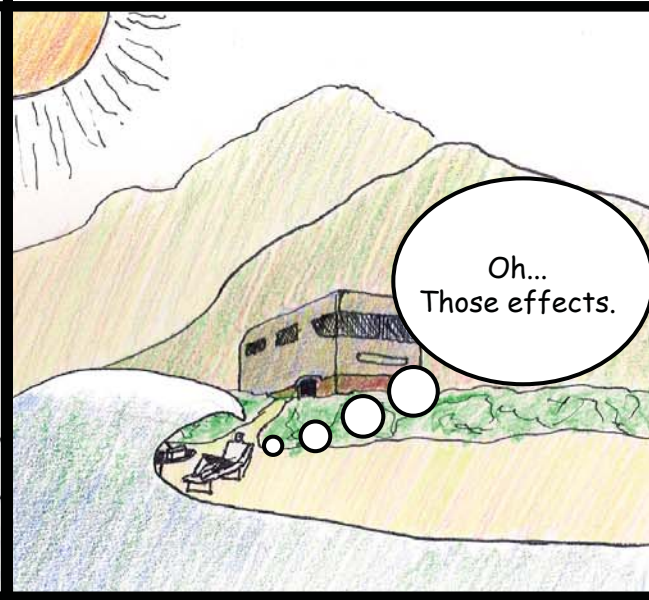
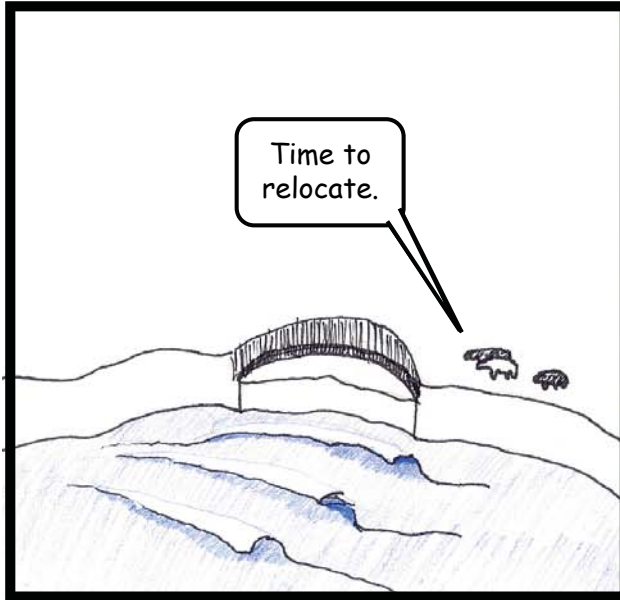
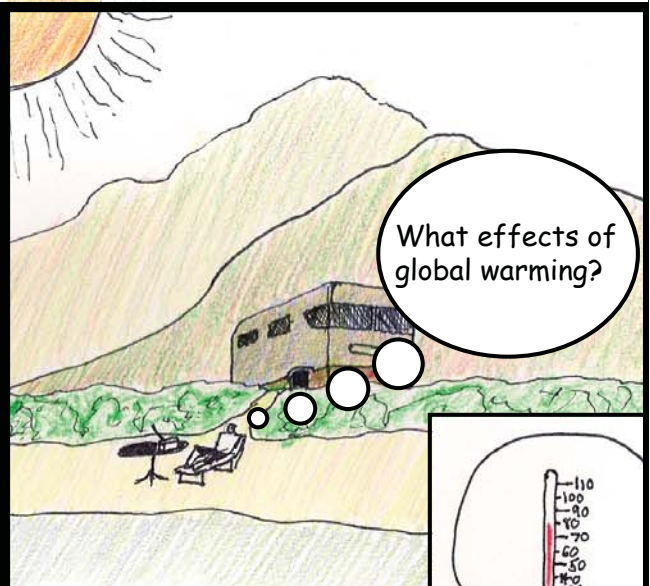
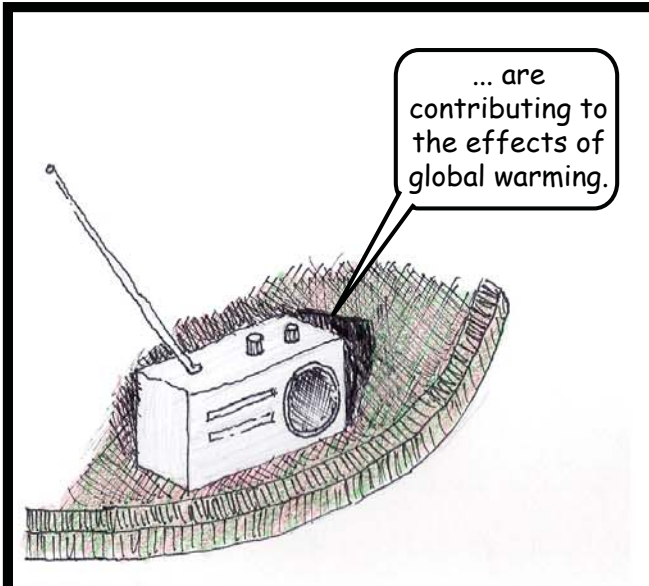
The simple fact is that if public transportation was made more efficient and convenient, more people would use it even if it costs more. The first necessity is to look at what is inconvenient and inefficient compared to the automobile. Individuals who already have enough stress trying to balance a work schedule, now add multiple forms of travel and stop locations. Let's not forget about one form of transit falling behind schedule and making the rider late for the next mode. It is a snowball effect after that. Proximity is another important aspect of transit. If the user has to walk five to ten blocks or even several blocks to get from one form of transportation to another it will either be too confusing or create too much of an inconvenience.

There is the extreme example of San Jose, California. The most efficient form of inter-city Bay Area public transportation is BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit), which does not even reach the city of San Jose, a city that represents the most populous city in the Bay Area. The nearest BART stop is Fremont, which, in traffic, is nearly 30-40 minutes north of San Jose. What is the incentive for using public transportation if you must drive 30-40 minutes in a car? Why not drive the entire commute? A quick and easy connection to the city would eliminate this question posed to commuters.

—Matt Geserick

Unsustainable Times: A Cartoon of Ecological Importance

By: Matt Geserick





AMERICAN DREAM V. 2.0

We've all heard the phrase, and it is to what we seemingly all aspire. 'The American Dream' is ingrained within the American mind set and with it certain ideals and values that the nation-at-large understands and possibly agrees on. Part of this reasoning is that deeply embedded within the founding of our nation are many of the ideals and values that we come to associate with 'The American Dream.'

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness." This, the second line in the *Declaration of Independence* is probably the best summation of what we like to refer to as 'The American Dream.' More specifically, 'The American Dream' is more commonly thought of pertaining to the unalienable rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I assume that we all have a decent understanding of what the right to life and liberty entail, but perhaps the right to the pursuit of happiness is slightly more elusive.

In attempting to understand what 'The American Dream' is and what it means to us today, and arguably much of the world who it seems is striving to live the lifestyle we enjoy in this country, we must first attempt to understand what Thomas Jefferson meant when he wrote the words in the *Declaration of Independence*. Looking at the phrase, "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness," we can find similar phrases in other historical texts. Most notably in the "Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress"¹ from 1774 and in "The Virginia Declaration of Rights"² from June 12, 1776 we find the phrases, "life, liberty and property," and "the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety," respectively. Was Jefferson merely substituting 'property' for 'pursuit of happiness', or was he making a statement that the right of property was not unalienable, or was Jefferson stating that property was inherently linked with the pursuit of happiness and the one was understood within the other?

The 'pursuit of happiness' and 'property' are not interchangeable, nor are they inexorably linked. Property was a hot topic in the fight for independence as the colonists were protesting the taxation of their properties by the English government. It wasn't, however, a protestation of taxation alone, but rather of the lack of representation the colonists had in the English government:

"The best evidence that the right to pursue property was not the greatest concern is the fact that the colonists, in the decade prior and all the way up to the vote for independence, were not contesting the fact that they were being taxed; they were contesting that they were being EXCLUSIVELY taxed in ways that other parts of Britain's emerging empire were not; that a government in which they had non-representation was taking exclusively from them and offering them nothing in return."³

Nor do I believe that Jefferson was simply stating that the right of property was not unalienable. After all, he prefaces his listing of unalienable rights with, "that among these [rights] are ..." His list was not meant to be all inclusive and it most likely reflects what he felt to be most important at the time, and possibly for the future independence of the colonists. In fact, the real basis behind the American mind set of the right of property is more capitalistic in nature rather than based in the cause for American independence. The capitalist mind set, while arguably American was still very premature during this time as it really took the type of government that was being created in America for capitalism to really take hold.³

Yet when it comes to 'The American Dream' we seem to have this idea that property ownership is an inherent part of it. Think of all the real estate commercials with a smiling couple (perhaps they are expecting) standing in front of their new suburban home proudly displaying the keys. Think of how people talk about home ownership as a part of growing up, that it becomes almost necessary to have your own little slice of heaven surrounded by a white picket fence and a two-car garage. In 1995, 47% of all Americans lived in suburbia.⁴ The growing trend for new home construction is centered in suburbia as well with 80% of all new single-family home construction in the past 20 years occurring in suburbia.⁴ We understand, furthermore, that the landscapes we create with suburbia are inherently unsustainable. We cannot continue to build our cities and towns in this manner and expect them to last. Instead we are fixated on a quick and easy solution set on self gratification for here and now.

John Locke had written about these three rights—life, liberty and property—in 1690 in an essay titled "Concerning Human Understanding."

He had also written about the right to pursue happiness in the same essay:

“As therefore the highest perfection of intellectual nature lies in a careful and constant pursuit of true and solid happiness; so the care of ourselves, that we mistake not imaginary for real happiness, is the necessary foundation of our liberty. The stronger ties we have to an unalterable pursuit of happiness in general, which is our greatest good, and which, as such, our desires always follow, the more are we free from any necessary determination of our will to any particular action, and from a necessary compliance with our desire, set upon any particular, and then appearing preferable good, till we have duly examined whether it has a tendency to, or be inconsistent with, our real happiness: and therefore, till we are as much informed upon this inquiry as the weight of the matter, and the nature of the case demands, we are, by the necessity of preferring and pursuing true happiness as our greatest good, obliged to suspend the satisfaction of our desires in particular cases.”⁵

So in carefully reading that passage we can see that not only does Locke view the pursuit of happiness as “the highest perfection of intellectual nature,” but also as “our greatest good.” Furthermore he states that out of necessity of it being our greatest good we are “obliged to suspend the satisfaction of our desires in particular cases.”

Wait a minute! We are obliged to suspend the satisfaction of our desires in particular cases? How many people in the pursuit of “The American Dream” have blatantly disregarded the idea that there is a greater responsibility than pursuing their own happiness? How different might our landscapes appear if we were constantly striving for the greater good? The greater good not only being the pursuit of our own happiness, but also acknowledging the fact that what might make us happy is not always the best for everyone and cannot lead to happiness for others. As citizens we need to start thinking this way and creating opportunities for the pursuit of happiness not on a personal, individual level but on a higher and more inclusive level, the pursuit of happiness for all.

—Brian Henry

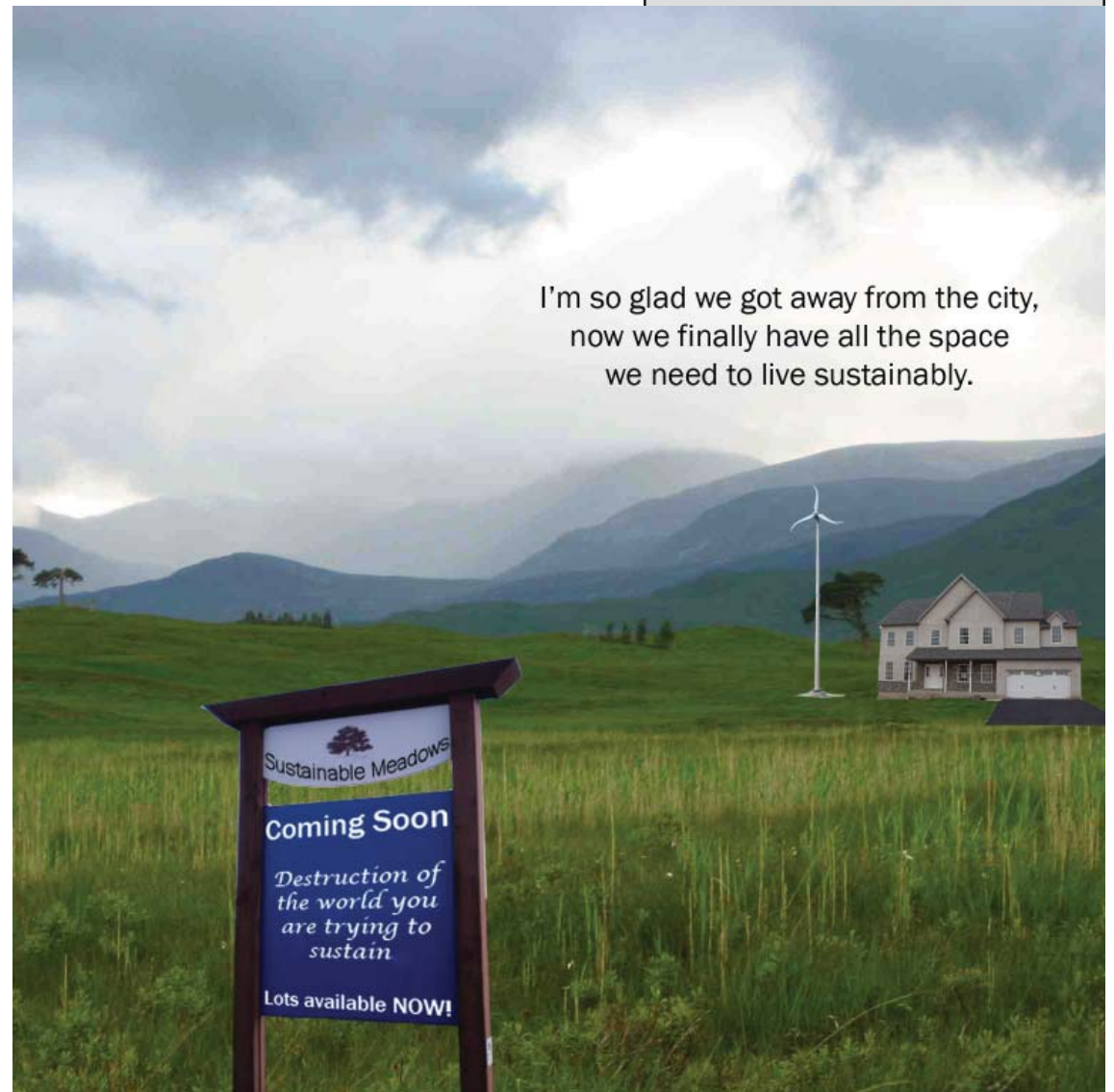
1 “Declaration and Resolves of the First Continental Congress” <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/18th_century/resolves.asp>

2 “The Virginia Declaration of Rights” <<http://odur.let.rug.nl/~usa/D/1776-1800/independence/virdor.htm>>

3 <<http://forum.objectivismonline.net/index.php?s=c34aa651e3d6d0efbabd13a83cacfba3&showtopic=13747&st=0&p=189694&#entry189694>>

4 “Propositions for Suburban Living.” *JAE* 61.1 (2007).

5 <<http://www.amorian.org/2009/03/24/the-origin-of-the-pursuit-of-happiness/>>.





RECONNECTING TO PLACE

The American way of life thrives on global trade. Very few Americans avoid supporting the globalized economy in their daily lives; the morning cup of coffee, delicious tropical fruits, the clothes on our backs, computers and other electronics, and the oil that powers our cars are all major US imports, and the list goes on and on. Many of the things we buy are extracted, manufactured, or grown outside of the United States. Cheap labor and fuel contribute to relatively low prices, allowing us to consume and acquire much more than we need.

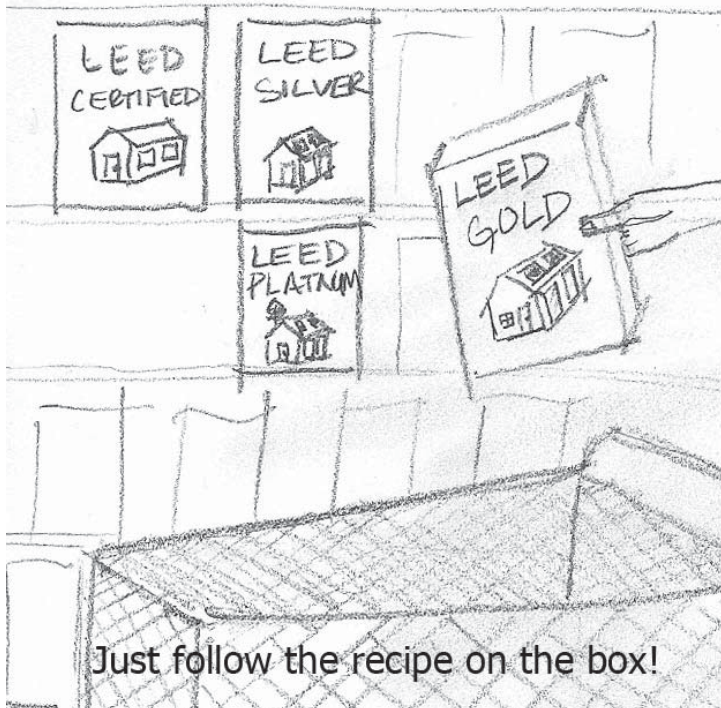
The global marketplace tends to hide many of the negative consequences of global trade, or at the very least, it makes them much easier to ignore. Americans notoriously consume and waste; these behaviors have become embedded in our throw-it-away culture. Overconsumption, encouraged by the economy and supported by falsely low prices, often feeds both social and environmental problems, such as exploited or underpaid laborers, wars over resources, pollution, landscape degradation, and climate change. While some of us experience these issues first hand, most of these problems occur abroad, and a lot of us either don't know or don't care, resulting in little change.

On the other hand, most of us are very motivated to act when we are directly affected by some problem. If a factory is polluting our drinking water, we are probably going to do something about it, whereas if the same factory was located in a foreign country, we would see it as their problem, even if we were the ones buying the factory's products. While this behavior alone cannot solve the world's problems, one way that we may help our environment and ourselves, is through re-connecting with our local places. Most of us have one or more places where we feel at home, whether it is a specific building or buildings, a town or city, a part of the natural landscape, or some combination of the three. Many people associate more with the people, culture, and built environment of a place, than with landscape it is a part of, because many people spend most of their time in the built environment. On the other hand, Native Americans historically depended more directly on the land for survival than we do today and thus had a very close relationship with the earth, as well as extensive knowledge of their region. This connection was solidified by their rootedness to the place they had lived for many years and would continue to inhabit.

By better understanding the history and natural environment of a place, we may be able to form stronger connections to place, wherever we may call home, as well as a greater sense of stewardship and responsibility. Moving toward regional self-sufficiency and depending less on imports could help us get to know our places better and to bring light to some of the destructive and detrimental practices that are harming the environment (not to mention, decrease our use of fossil fuels for transportation).

With my thesis project, I hope to enhance the cultural resources and knowledge base available to a small community and regional center, as well as celebrate their importance to that particular place.

—Melissa Keithley



TEACHING FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

There are a lot of resources at our disposal when it comes to education, but the one that has the greatest potential is that of the virtual experience, especially in the case of educational games. This potential exists mainly because the level of engagement for the student can be set from an online textbook to a fully interactive simulation. In addition, this media can be distributed in many ways, making it easier for students, teachers and parents to access. Some after-school programs are adopting educational games as part of their activities because of the success they are having in improving test scores. If we recognize the potential of educational games in our supplementary instruction, then we should look into how this can benefit our normal curriculum.

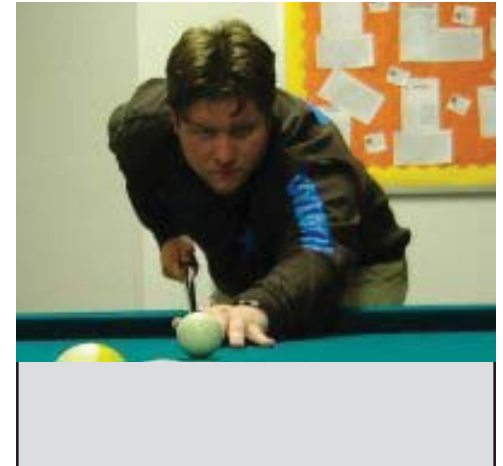
What makes educational games today better than the ones of decades past is that they are not the sugar-coated games of the 90s. Even though there were some successful games like Oregon Trail and Math Blaster, most only engaged students on a minimal level. Today the technology to make educational games is far more advanced and cheaper than before, businesses focused on making these games are adding richer story lines and better graphics to engaged students on a deeper level. So the user can develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Games that involve these elements are the games of the future.

Quest Atlantis is one of these games. Created by Sasha Barab, Quest Atlantis is an educational game that covers three areas of study—writing, math, and science. In the science exercise the students navigate an avatar around a National Park, to find out why the fish are dying; they must test water samples, interview local interest groups, and figure out what is happening to the fish. When Quest Atlantis (QA) was compared to traditional methods (TM) of teaching in an experiment, QA was shown to improve students' test scores over traditional methods. When the students were asked if they enjoyed the activity, 86%¹ in the QA group said they did, while only 22%¹ did in the TM group.

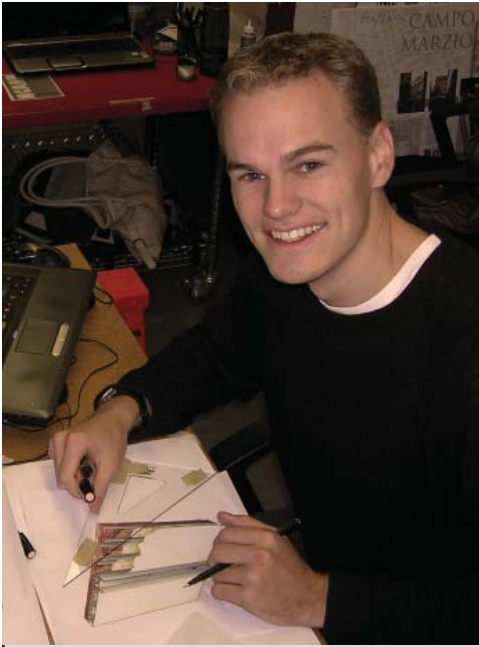
There is a time when teaching from a book is appropriate, but we must look to the horizon at better ways to make students productive, inspire passion, and develop skills that will aid them in the future.

1 Data provided by the Quest Atlantis web site: <<http://atlantis.crlt.indiana.edu/site/view/Researchers>>.

—Joel Kim



BALANCE BEAM OF SUSTAINABILITY



REDEEMING CREATION

IN SEARCH OF A RATIONAL JUSTIFICATION FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Today, efforts to promote sustainability in our relationship to the natural world have been widely accepted as imperative, especially in educated, secular circles. The greatly overlooked irony is that well educated, secular people should know better. They should know better because, if we pause for a moment to examine the rational basis for such a view, we quickly find it is lacking, and the secular arguments and philosophical foundations we would expect to give support to the notion of sustainability quickly prove to be as empty and devoid of substance as the recycling bins at a garbage man's convention.

If we are to have a rational justification for a sustainable approach, we must be able to identify our guiding principle, our philosophical goal, and we must be able to defend it and prove its value objectively. In other words, we must be able to point to a legitimate ideal for which we are striving. Secondly, if we are to tell anyone they "should" promote sustainability, we must be able to show why there is an obligation to work toward our ideal.

What, then, is the ideal that guides secular advocates of sustainability? What we commonly hear stated or implied is that the ideal condition for which sustainability strives is that of unspoiled nature. At least as a model, if not always literally, the wilderness is the aspirational goal. However, the wilderness condition clearly fails as a desirable ideal. Although there is much talk of the beauty, efficiency, and synergistic balance in nature, even a superficial investigation will reveal that the natural world also includes terrible diseases, brutal violence, painful suffering, and ultimately death for all involved. If we merely accept these conditions as being unobjectionable, natural parts of an ideal world, then we have completely removed any grounds for advocating sustainable practice. For, on a secular view, humans are 100% a part of the natural world, and if the violence, suffering, and destruction in nature are excusable, then so are any of man's actions that are violent, destructive, or cause pain. Therefore, we must conclude that "unspoiled" wilderness is too spoiled with suffering, even in its natural state, to serve as our ideal.

Some will take the next step and say the ideal is not wilderness in its current state, but rather a "regenerative" approach which restores nature. The problem here is that the terms "re-generate" and "re-store" imply bringing something back to a former condition. In this case, however, the previous ideal condition never existed, so to speak of regenerating it becomes meaningless.

At this point someone may admit "regenerative" is perhaps not technically accurate, but point out that the ideal we are talking about can be described more accurately as "natural conditions enhanced through human intervention to minimize harm." Although this sounds good at first, it fails on two counts. First, since humans are fully a part of nature, the theory is no better conceptually than the wilderness ideal; it merely adds an arbitrary and selfish focus on the opinions of one species. Second, we have no justification for the idea that minimizing harm or pain is actually a "better" condition. Pain is natural. On what grounds do we say it should be reduced or eliminated? We appeal to our moral sensibilities to give support to this notion, but in secularism, our moral sense is merely a product of evolution that has developed because it aids in our survival. Therefore, we can't trust our moral sense to tell us what is actually better, or what we should do, but only what may help us to survive.

Perhaps at this point we are willing to accept that our ideal is an arbitrarily anthropocentric vision; we acknowledge that, although we do not like the sound of it, this is ultimately the nature of our ideal, and these principles of a regenerative approach are still noble even if the philosophical grounding is not what we would wish it to be. Yet, even if we can bring ourselves to ignore these apparent flaws in our guiding principle, we still have three serious problems. 1) There is no justification for our choice, and it therefore becomes a non-rational leap, determined not by logical necessity but merely by the desperate desire to find some ground, any ground, from which to defend sustainability. 2) It is pointless and futile, for we can do nothing to prevent the ultimate extinction of every individual and every species. Every ecosystem we try to preserve will eventually be destroyed, every species we try to protect will eventually be wiped out, and every individual life we seek to improve will eventually be erased. In fact, earlier extinction would certainly reduce death and pain by bringing an earlier end. Why should we protect any life then, even if it is our own? As French existentialist philosopher Albert Camus declared, in

the absence of divine purpose in the universe, the only serious philosophical problem is why we should not commit suicide. When we hear this, we may feel compelled to respond that life itself has value and meaning, but we have no grounds for doing so. The secular view tells us clearly life is a result of chance physical reactions. It happened by mindless accident, and therefore has absolutely no purpose, meaning or objective value.

The final problem with accepting this flawed ideal as our rational justification for sustainability is 3) it contains no moral obligation. In fact, this is an underlying problem with all potential secular principles for sustainable practice; apart from failing as worthy ideals, they lack the ability to command any legitimate moral responsibility. There is no “ought.” They may seek to persuade by describing the benefits of a sustainable or “regenerative” approach, but they can be refuted by the weakest intellectual opponent of all—apathy. If a person does not care about their reasons—and given the lack of rational justification shown above, why should he?—the secular world view is powerless to show him he has any obligation to act or even agree with them.

What we see, then, is each potential secular justification for sustainability fails both the test of providing a legitimate ideal and the test of demonstrating moral obligation. Although the arguments may seem intuitive and self-evidently true when left unexamined, investigation by the light of reason reveals them to be hollow and unreliable foundations.

Does this mean we should abandon the cause of sustainability? Well, if we want to maintain a consistent secular approach, yes. But is giving a Godless account of the universe our most fundamental premise? No. Or at least, it shouldn't be. If we are more precise, we can see that it is not actually the secular arguments for sustainability which seem self-evident; it is our moral perceptions which seem self-evident. Our moral sense tells us that suffering actually is evil, that life is inherently valuable, and that we are morally obligated to care for the environment. Both secularists and theists can agree that these moral perceptions are accurate, so the debate is not between immoral secularists on one side and moral theists on the other. Rather, we are asking if these perceptions can be affirmed within a consistent secular viewpoint, and we find they cannot.

The secular world view, however, is not the only one on the market. The Christian, or biblical, view stands in sharp contrast by describing the universe in a compelling story that justifies each of the intellectual and moral positions which the secular sustainability advocate holds but struggles to explain.

The biblical account tells us the universe was created by a perfect and sovereign God (Ge 1:1, Isa 25:1, Jn 1:3), and that He created it good (Ge 1:31, 1 Ti 4:4). It tells us He created man “in his image” (Ge 1:27, 1 Co 11:7) and placed him in a universe with an objective moral order (Ps 19:7, Ro 2:14-15). It further tells us man rebelled against this moral order (Ro 3:23, 5:12), which we call the Fall, and this act corrupted the whole of creation (Ge 3:17-19, Ro 8:22). It tells us in order to redeem His creation, God came to earth, died, and was resurrected in an act that conquered death (Acts 4:10-12, Ro 4:23-5:2, 1 Co 15:54-57). Finally, it tells us He will return to judge the world and restore His creation to perfection (Isa 65:17, Mt 24:30, 1 Co 15:50-53).

The Christian view affirms the value of life and of the natural world as being part of God's creation, yet also explains the corruption, pain, and suffering in the natural world as a result of the Fall. In this, it affirms our idealization of “unspoiled” nature, because in nature we get a sense of the purity and beauty of God's original creation, but it also affirms our obligation to alleviate pain and suffering where we can, because the world is no longer perfect. Because man is part of God's creation, it affirms man is a part of nature, but because man is created specially in the image of God, it also affirms our sense that it is possible to make a meaningful distinction between man and the rest of nature. It explains how we can trust our moral sense to be accurate (being given by God), but not perfect (being corrupted by the Fall), and it grounds the reality of moral obligation as having a basis in the perfect nature of a sovereign God. It even affirms our use of words like “regenerative” as referencing the original, unfallen state of creation. In short, it explains the What, the Why, and the “Ought” in a way that aligns with the world around us.

Most interesting for sustainability, however, is the story and message at the center of the Bible: the redemption of a fallen creation. We can justify sustainability biblically on the notion of stewardship—that is, the universe belongs to someone else and we are morally obligated to care for it—but much stronger is the notion of redemption. Creation is fallen, corrupted, and not what it should be; God seeks to restore it

to a state of perfection, and when we work to regenerate life on earth, we are carrying out His will as part of His great plan of redemption and new life.

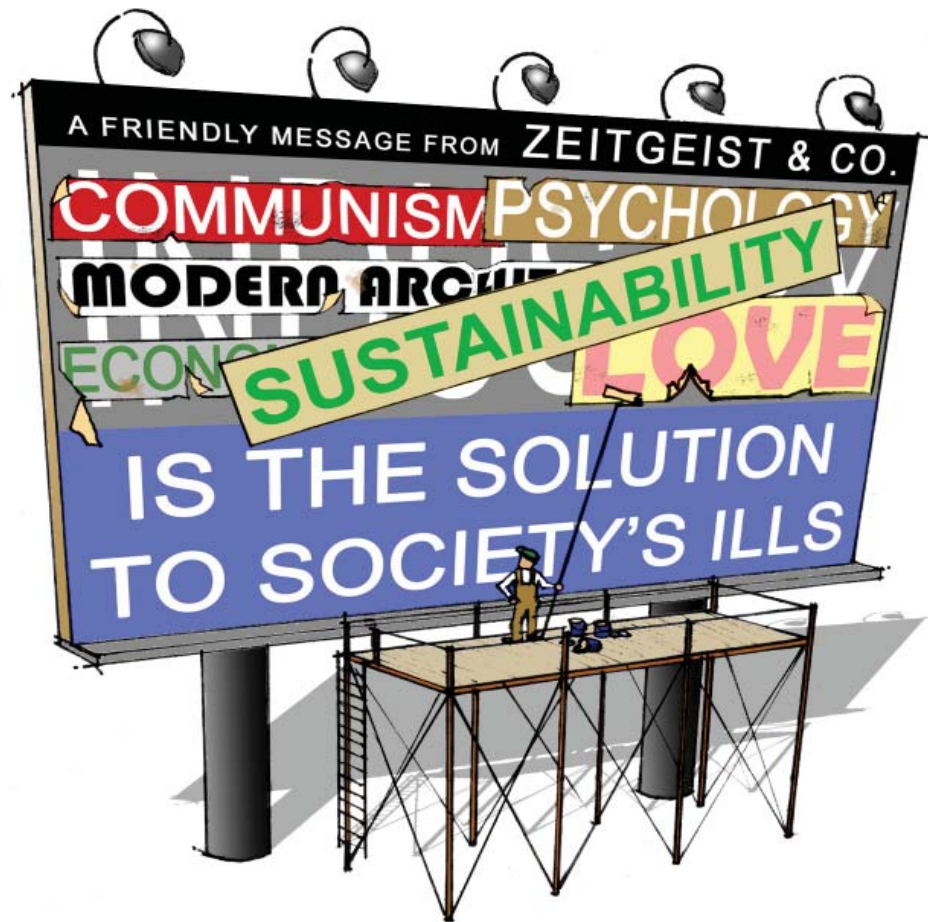
These rational justifications cannot be borrowed to provide grounds for sustainability for someone with a secular world view; they are inextricably bound to and derived from the Christian view of the nature of God, Man, the Creation, the Fall, salvation, and biblical revelation. And not only do they ground our efforts in sustainability and regenerative design, but they carry depth of implication that points us toward appropriate goals and practices. For example, any efforts to preserve a natural environment that would aggravate or prolong poverty should be avoided, as the Bible instructs us to care for the poor and to trust in God to provide for our needs.

To take another example, the Bible speaks strongly against the common idea that wilderness is God's creation whereas cities are Man's creation.

Even Christians like William Penn (the founder of Philadelphia) held this view, but as catholic architect David Mayernik points out, "...the best of human endeavor is as much infused with divine presence as the natural world. Indeed more so, since nature...is as fallen as man and requires 'salvation' by means of positive human intervention." The Bible glorifies the works of God expressed in nature (Psalm 19:1-3), but it also glorifies urban life, agriculture, and thriving populations. In Ezekiel 36:33 and following, God tells the Israelites "On the day I cleanse you from all your sins, I will resettle your towns, and the ruins will be rebuilt. The desolate land will be cultivated instead of lying desolate in the sight of all who pass through it. They will say 'This land that was laid waste has become like the garden of Eden; the cities that were lying in ruins, desolate and destroyed, are now fortified and inhabited.' ...So will the ruined cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the LORD." The Bible then affirms beauty and value in man-made places and cultivated land as also being part of God's creation. It encourages us not to be afraid to intervene to improve nature, as it is fallen, but cautions us to be careful how we do, as we are also fallen.

We hear much talk of holistic approaches to dealing with the natural world, but few actually fit that description. This one does. The Bible's approach is truly holistic as it speaks not just to all parts of the natural world but also to all parts of each person. It challenges and convicts us, revealing our hidden faults, and it presents a real and appropriately difficult and powerful path to heaven and a renewed world. This contrasts dramatically with the various naïve secular visions of utopia which lack the necessary power to restore the world and change people, and which ignore the evil in human nature. The Bible cuts like a sword into all areas of the discussion and into all areas of our lives, as we would expect a truly accurate picture of reality to do. It justifies what we know to be true in our minds, convicts us with what we know to be true in our hearts, and promises what we have always hoped will be true in the future.

—Ben Ledford



"WHEW! I'M GLAD I FINALLY GOT *THAT* RIGHT."

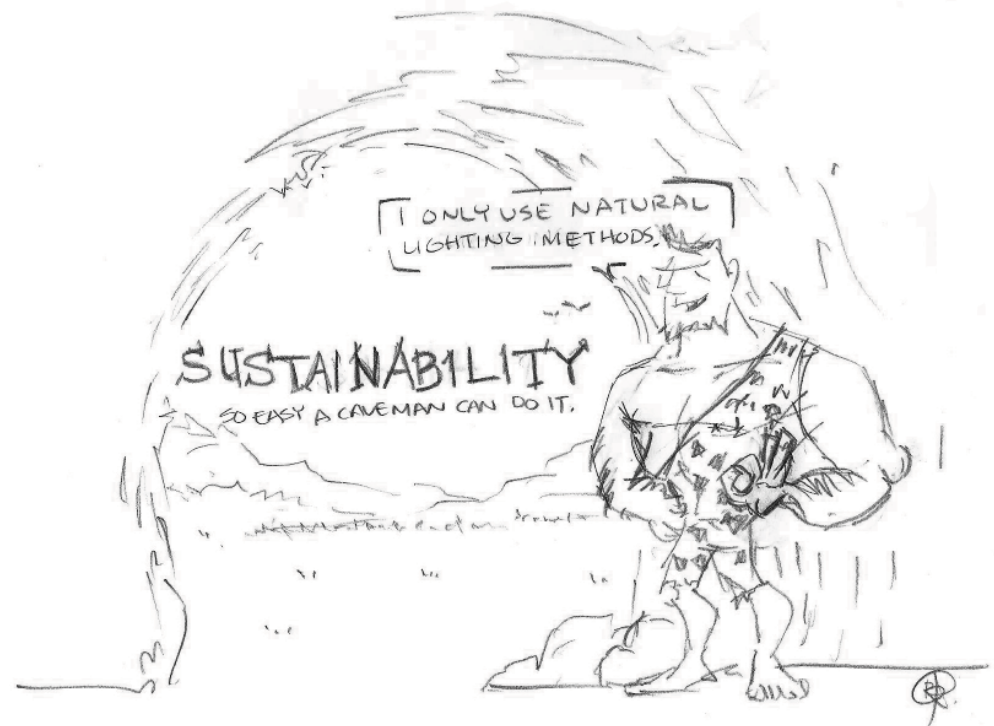
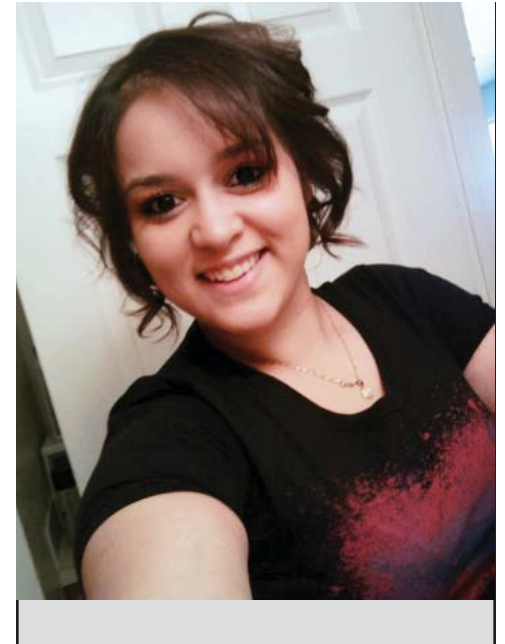
FOCUS ON WARDEN

Warden, Washington is an agricultural town that has been slowly growing in the past 10 years. I was raised in this small farm town where everyone knows each other and most work environments consist of general labor in field work or food processing industries. The industrial environment is one of the main sources of income of a majority of Warden's population even with high unemployment rates. Potatoes are the product processed in the biggest facility in Warden, which employs about 300 team members. This industry has become a second home to people because they tend to spend more time at work than they do at home. People work in an enclosed environment for 12-hour days, average 5 days a week, all year. It is not a very welcoming job environment because of what it takes to produce fries, hash browns, potato wedges, and all.

The big, heavy machinery takes up a lot of room and requires many team members to operate them which create a lot of safety hazard areas as well as injuries. I have worked in the same company for the past five years as a quality assurance technician, secretary, human resource intern, employee service representative and engineering technician; so I am very familiar with the facility. Safety is the key word the company has been focusing on to ensure everyone comes and goes safely to work. I know that people seem to adapt to anything that can harm them and are cautious as much as they can be, but is that imperfect adaptability causing all injuries? Through my years of education, I have learned that there are many factors to human behavior in an environment that I want to implement in this facility. There are dark areas, bright areas, stuffy areas, cold areas, hot areas, and more that take a lot of energy and focus to become accustomed to. Lack in natural lighting, adequate ventilation, and social space integration are a few issues I have learned can affect individual performance.

The main focus of my thesis project is to design a team member facility for the Warden potato processing plant for the improvement of team member job performance. Through client requests, I am designing three options of possible areas where a team member facility can be placed in the existing processing plant that better suits the team members and company feasibility.

—Blanca Rodriguez





ARTS KILL SUBURBAN SPRAWL

Most architects agree that the goals of program development and schematic design are to define a problem and develop the best and most creative solution. This same process can be applied appropriately to many other avenues of life, for example; the issue of suburban sprawl. A focus on the cause of the problem is necessary to a solution. Why then do we look at the negative results and ignore that there might be a single cause? We as a nation and as a community of designers continue to focus on and attempt to counter the symptoms of the continuing problem of suburban sprawl rather than actually resolving the cause in the first place: the death of our city cores.

Today's media and culture love the use of the words sustainable, green, and eco-friendly. Yet one of the biggest problems has still yet to be solved, that of urban sprawl. Society has developed what are often referred to as donut cities; frosting around the outside and absolutely nothing left in the middle. This frosting of suburban development is that of lower land costs, more personalized spaces, fulfilling the "American Dream" life style, and so forth. As this frosting has been without matching response in development of the city cores, the centers of our cities have been emptied of life and vitality. The centers become more desolate as they lack development and are thus less appealing. This causes fewer people to want to live or work in these once prosperous and very important sources of commerce and community interaction.

As cities become more deserted, the ever feared "dark alleys" and "deserted streets" become more prominent. The business class during the day may still occupy the area, but from 5pm until 8am the next day the streets are left unwatched and thus unsafe. This sort of desolation is a continuous downward spiral. fewer people means that fewer shops will be able to survive, which again causes fewer people to live in or visit that area of town continuing the negative trend.

These problems are often blamed on the ideal "American Dream" of the single family house with a big yard. Thus suburbia, by association, is blamed for the problem of this unsustainable, commuter, land-wasting way of life that we currently inhabit. But analyzing the flip side of the coin—if you make people want to live in the city, then they will. We shouldn't blame suburbia; instead we need to realize that suburban sprawl is a result of the fact that cities stopped providing people with what they wanted. Why would anyone live somewhere that doesn't have what they need or want?

Rather than fighting suburbia and telling everyone how bad it is and that they should move back into the city, why not actually give them an incentive to make the move? Provide the motivation to move back to the city center and it will again become the center of life that it once was. One way start a reverse flow is by locating appropriate community spaces and programs in these cores that people come to despite location or status. Once the vitality starts to return to a place, business will again be able to flourish and adequately draw people and their residences back into the central community districts.

What can bring this necessary vitality back to the cities? What is able to survive being an independent entity while the surrounding area rebuilds itself? Arts, dance, theater, and music are all things that have lived through the ages and still prosper even through depressions. They have their highs and lows, but they always have a diverse following from the rich, the poor, and everyone in between. This sort of program is the ideal thing to be placed in a civic downtown as a revitalization tool as it brings all levels of performers and community members to the region throughout the days all year round.

This type of concept is very logical when looking at the causes of suburbia rather than the ways to cover and adjust the negative effects. Downtowns can be made active and desirable again through use of appropriately placed civic buildings that can reverse suburban sprawl as people will once again want to be part of the center of vitality and the community.

—Garrett Lumens

Why recycle?
It's only
one can.



It's only 1



One doesn't
matter

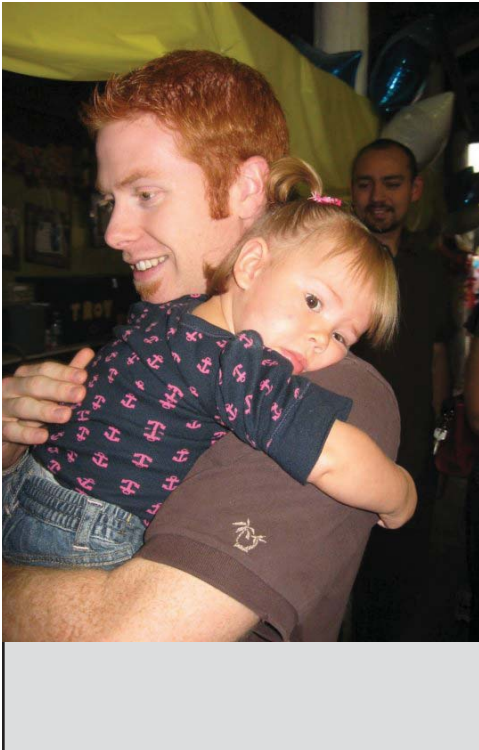


It's only 1 can,
what can it
matter?



Why would 1
can make a
difference?





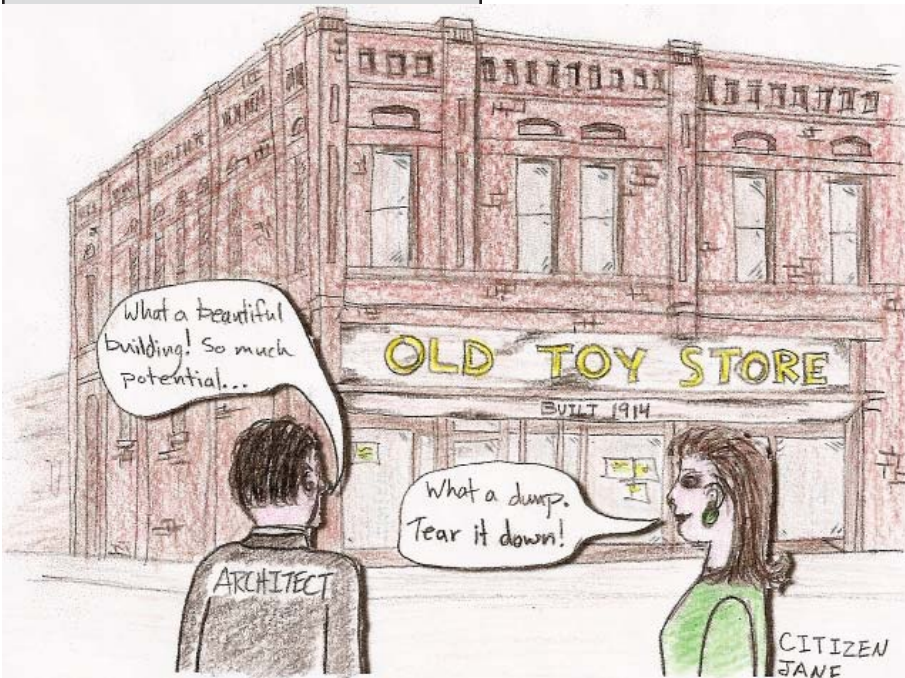
TAKING BACK OUR EMPTY LOTS

The first thing that comes to mind when considering the location of a new commercial or residential project is, more likely than not, a farm field. Developers, contractors, and new home buyers always look towards the outskirts of town to find their new golden opportunity. Does every new development really have to rise on top of potatoes and corn? What makes that land more fertile for concrete slabs and foundations, than for the roots of our life source? It's clear that there are other location options to consider when building a new project than the typical farm field. And they are often found in prime locations, already surrounded by potential consumers, renters, and supporting businesses. They are the ever important 'infill' projects.

Start by taking a drive through city downtowns, then through older town neighborhoods. These areas are, without a doubt, filled with empty lots and rundown buildings. Some sites may already be clear of existing structures or pavement, but others, the majority, will still have the previous infrastructure standing strong, yet completely abandoned. Both situations provide the potential for a great project, despite the presence of any previous infrastructure.

By far, the best way to build sustainably is through re-purposing structures and materials that already exist. In this way, the vast majority of material is already on site. No need to buy something brand new and have it shipped from across country, or to pay a construction crew to erect a structure from scratch. Some investment in repairs and new materials will be necessary, but it will not compare to ordering 'everything' brand new.

It may also be thought that an existing building would limit the design expression and creativity of any future project. However, that's not the case. Some of the most creative buildings that people are interested in are older, re-purposed buildings, which blend the historic design and materials with the current and trendy. Consider the Tate Modern Museum in London, or the Ecotrust Building in Portland, they are amazing and beautiful inside. Historic construction techniques and materials are very compelling for many because we do not build like we used to and are not accustomed to seeing it.



Lastly, a great deal of older buildings, especially if they were older shopping malls or box stores, were probably designed poorly in the first place. And that means that the potential is endless when it comes to redesigning and retrofitting them. In most cases, almost anything done to them will be an improvement and definitely give back to a surrounding neighborhood that it once destroyed with its poor design. These many abandoned lots are often eyesores to the community, and are in need of a talented designer's touch.

Finding the farmer willing to sellout his field of potatoes and corn is not hard to come by these days. It may even be tempting due to the low price they ask. Easy doesn't always mean best. Instead, look within cities to find the potential infill sites that are waiting for your project. Consider the good that a project will do by bringing businesses and dwelling spaces back to where the people SHOULD be in the first place. Why would a family want to struggle packing up all six kids into the wagon and driving twenty minutes to the edge of town, when it would be much more pleasant to just walk down the street. Let the farmer continue feeding your family, and give your community a chance with all of the potential that it holds.

—Chris Stevens

OBESITY IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The way that people live and interact with others is the way that they design their buildings. The human body can easily be compared to the buildings that we design. So how do we compare buildings to the human body? Just like the human body, buildings consume. Where the body consumes food, the buildings consume energy. Today's buildings are very much like Americans. Overconsumption of food has been a result of many obese Americans that sit around on the couch watching television and being non-productive. These people exist only to please themselves and do not really care about themselves, or even what others think of them. Like obese Americans, many of our buildings over-consume energy. In these buildings, the lighting is still inefficient, and the spaces are still uncomfortable for the tenants. These problems result in an inefficient quality of work produced by the tenants because they would rather be somewhere else than in the uncomfortable presence of these obese buildings.

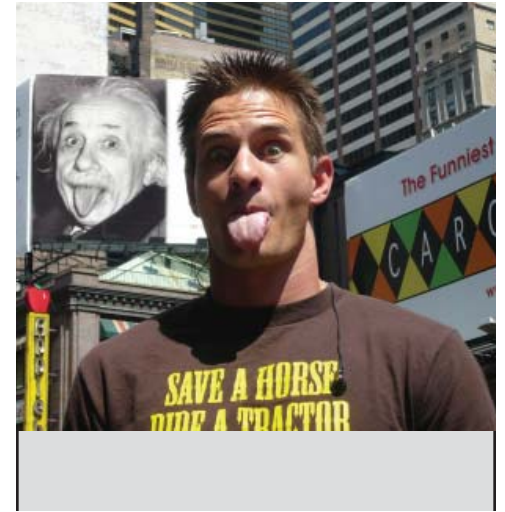
To change these buildings, people will first have to change their own way of living. By consuming less and growing their own food, people will bring down their own carbon footprint and live a healthier lifestyle. If people were able to do this simple task, it would change how they perceive the world. People would not have to depend on others to provide for and take care of them. They would be able to understand how to design a building that produces energy for itself and potentially others, instead of using energy from the grid that has been produced from other areas, which in turn would help with the amount of carbon that the buildings produce.

Scientific evidence confirms the ways in which climate change can radically alter our physical environment, ultimately affecting how and where we live; it also highlights the need for greater attention to the design of our built environment and better management of water and energy. Many governments have responded to scientific evidence and community concerns by developing policies. These governments have taken action by addressing and informing businesses and the broader communities, encouraging and rewarding them for good practice, and, where necessary, introducing legislation to manage environmentally sustainable development (ESD). At the local level, ESD is being addressed in detail by educators, planners, designers, and facility managers, as well as the end users—students, teachers, and the community.

As a student, I have also learned about the carbon that buildings produce and the impact that they have on the natural environment and our everyday lives. Buildings can define us and change the way that we live and the way that we interact with one another. One topic that has been brewing in the world of architecture is the living building design challenge. The living building challenge is attempting to raise the bar and define the most advanced measure of sustainability in the built environment. Although it might be difficult to achieve the living building challenge, understanding the standard and documenting compliance with the requirements is straightforward. Over the course of 12 months, the design should produce as much power as it consumes, all from on-site renewable energy. All the water for occupant use will come from rainfall, except where prohibited by local health codes. All wastewater and storm water will be managed on-site. All occupants will have access to operable windows for fresh air and daylight. The design will have “features intended solely for human delight and the celebration of culture, spirit and place,” according to the Living Building Challenge of the Cascade Region Green Building Council.

I think that the design of a living building would be beneficial not only for the occupants, but also for the rest of the community. Having a building that takes care of its tenants and the environment would attract a great deal of attention and would also change the way people think and interact with their surroundings. The built environment has the potential to set an example for the way people should be living, instead of people setting an example for the built environment.

—Nico van Wyngaardt





OLD BUILDING—NEW LIFE

As Sidney Hyman once said, “What still remains to be done I to carry the past in the marrow of our bones and as visual objects before our eyes and to go on from there in building, as Jefferson would say, an empire for liberty.” There are so many forgotten buildings that are mere vessels which are bursting with opportunities for improvement. With this new age of “green” thinking, it’s not just designers that are passionate about lasting structures and materials, the whole world is encouraging and emphasizing a new way of life, which is really just turning back to the old way of life. We must return to our roots.

What was instilled in me when I was younger is to never let anything go to waste. If you get something, you make it last until it can no longer be used, and when its original use is withered you find a new use for it, or take parts of it and apply it to something else. The lesson to learn here is to be resourceful. I make an effort to be as resourceful as possible and by doing so, saving myself time, money, and the environment, which characterizes the intentions of this project; to demonstrate such habits.

I grew up in a suburb of San Francisco wherethere was, even in such high density, a very tight knit community because everyone knew everyone else and were in such close proximity to each other. Burlingame is rich with historical architecture that is still in (its original) use. Then, during my high school years, we moved to Middleton, Idaho where there was only one store, one restaurant, one gas station, and absolutely no stop lights. This, inevitably, was a true culture shock to me, since everything looked the same and all the houses were absent of any meaning or character, just cookie-cutter/contractor suburban sprawl as far as the eye could see. While attending college at the University of Idaho, I was exposed to the Spokane area just a few hours north of Moscow where there was a surplus of potential for change and adaptation for its particular built environment. This brought close to me both sides of the spectrum of what I experienced in both towns in which I grew up.

Now the built environment is becoming the American wasteland as we keep tearing down and spreading out. What need to do is to focus on re-using and adapting these buildings that have been neglected and forgotten. These historical places are loaded with personality and capability to be something practical and functional. Residents and businesses surrounding these buildings are merely onlookers that have become accustomed to the idea that these buildings are left abhorrent and untouched, therefore cast out as a potentially thriving establishments.

Developing the incumbent built environment to our advantage and recycling old buildings is something that people need to take into consideration; it is a different way to be innovative with design by having certain restrictions. It adds to the story, it keeps the creative flow continuous throughout the design world. If we are so focused on sustainability as designers, why not take what is already built that is either underutilized or disregarded as a nuisance, and breathe life into it? Let us not condemn these commemorated structures that were once full of activity and purpose, but bring them a new life.

My aim is to rejuvenate a historical building and bring a new meaning to its previous life. I intend to intricately aid in the sustainable adaptation of this brick masonry building by integrating innovative and local materials, reestablishing structural integrity, understanding details, recognizing and implementing community needs, responding to climatic circumstances by improving performance with energy reducing strategies, and enhancing and refurbishing cultural meaning. I would like to give new life to an old building that has been abandoned and forgotten. Instead of continuously spreading the built environment, I would like to recognize an aspect that has been ignored and displaced and provide an opportunity for revitalization.

Lewis Mumford affirmed, “The single building is but an element in a complex civic or landscape design. Except in the abstraction of drawing or photography no building exists in a void; it functions as a part of a greater whole and can be seen and felt only through dynamic participation in the whole.”

—Katy Ruegsegger



WOW! GOING GREEN?
DOES THE WHOLE
RIG RUN OFF OF
THAT STUFF?

HUH? OH, HAH, NO!
THAT'S JUST FOR
MY I-POD!

ROCK ON

GREEN