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Fall 1987

## InSites, Fall 1987

Utah State University

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# IN-SITES

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY BY THE UTAH STATE  
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DEPARTMENT OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING,  
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VOL. I  
FALL 87



## State of the Department

Since the last issue of "In-sites" at the end of Winter Quarter 1987, a number of changes have taken place in the department.

Many of you who attended the LAEP banquet last Spring are aware of the fact that Craig Johnson rescinded his activities as department head in order to return to full-time teaching, consulting, writing, and research activities. Even though he was showered with accolades by colleagues, friends, and students at the banquet, it is important to formally thank Craig for his many positive contributions to the department during his tenure as department head. He assumed his responsibilities during a most difficult and troubled period for the department and the university, ranging from incessant budget cuts to faculty morale. We all owe him a great deal and are in his debt for enhancing the quality and stature of the Department during that period.

As reported earlier the graduate program was evaluated for accreditation last February. It is a pleasure to report that on July 21, the Board of Landscape Architectural Accreditation of ASLA notified the Department that the graduate program was given full accreditation for the initial period of three years. The next review for the graduate program will occur in Spring 1990.

The undergraduate program is scheduled for its next review in the Spring 1989, and the faculty is presently examining a number of revisions in the undergraduate curriculum in order to present them to the visiting team a year from this Spring.

John Nicholson is a Fulbright scholar this year at the Institut fur Landschaftspflege und Naturschutz at the University of Hannover, West Germany. He is teaching several classes in landscape analysis and planning utilizing various computer tech-

niques. We recently received a letter from John, and it appears that he and his family are enjoying the experience a great deal.

Other members of the faculty have been fairly busy this summer in various conferences and workshops throughout the country. John Ellsworth and Vern Budge attended separate week long workshops on AutoCadd. They are currently working on integrating those programs more fully into the site engineering courses.

Sue Sanborn presented a paper on folkart in the landscape at the annual CELA meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, and most recently, gave a presentation on the same subject at the ASLA annual meeting in Baltimore.

Mike Timmons (Department travel agent) spent part of the summer arranging for a special travel study experience at Thames Polytechnic in Great Britain. It appears that the necessary arrangements have been finalized and that Mike and 15 students will be spending Spring Quarter this year in the landscape program at Thames Polytechnic and traveling in Western Europe.

Craig Johnson, along with several graduate students, also completed a major piece of research for Murray City. The project focused on the rehabilitation of derelict land for an urban nature park. The presentation of their work was enthusiastically received by the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources and Murray City.

Needless to say, the faculty are alive and well, and if the budget issues maintain some stability, we are all looking forward to another interesting and productive year.

Dick ■

## A Note from the Editors

Welcome to the fourth issue of *In-Sites*. It is the intent of the editorial staff that this be a newspaper that is representative of the department. All LAEP students, faculty, and alumni are invited to participate, and contributions in the form of opinions, articles, ideas, creative writing, or artwork are welcomed!

The purpose of the newspaper is to open communication lines within the department, with other departments on campus, with LAEP alumni, and with other ASLA chapters. *In-Sites* announces and reports on events, provides a forum for discussion of issues, and introduces LAEP-ites to fellow students and LA professionals.

Help the editors ensure that this newspaper speaks for the entire department. Contribute your ideas, writing, or graphics to *In-Sites* !

# Arcadia II

On November 2, Carl Steinitz of the Harvard Graduate School of Design, discussed the GSD's continuing research into what makes a landscape beautiful. Steinitz' work emphasizes the necessity we have of understanding the "what," or what he calls the descriptive model of the landscape. By understanding the "what" we can then move to the "why" and "how," or the predictive model. Finally, we as designers must translate the "why and how" into plans and designs that add beauty to, or subtract ugliness from the landscape. Steinitz called this last step the detailed planning and design model.

GSD students undertook their research by surveying visitor preferences at Arcadia National Park in Maine. Using a montage of black and white photographs, park visitors were asked to identify the places they felt were "beautiful" and those that were "ugly". The survey indicated that places chosen as "most beautiful" and "most ugly" were the same for all respondents. However, the range in between was more muddled.

Pulling ideas from early 1970 visual preference studies by the BLM, Shafer, Kaplan & Kaplan, Steinitz, and Appleton, Steinitz and the GSD students combined their survey results to form a new model. The visual preference indicators they selected for this model were 1) lack of cultural modification (anything man-made); 2) a sense of mystery; 3) prospect, or panoramic view; 4) edge effect (ie. water against land, agriculture against forest, etc.); and 5) view to water. They found cultural modification to be the strongest indicator of ugliness to park visitors. When cultural modification was overlain with the other indicators, a very powerful model ensued: a model that predicted when scenes in the landscape are preferred.

Following these studies, Arcadia National Park's ecological fragility was mapped (under the direction of ecologist Richard Forman, also at Harvard) and then combined with the new visual preference model the GSD team had created. This overlay revealed the places most suitable for change, as well as places that could not be altered without severe ecologic and visual impacts. Suitable places for development were those low in both visual preference and ecological integrity; unsuitable for alteration were places selected as most beautiful in the surveys and that were also ecologically fragile.

Throughout the process Steinitz and students have attempted to understand how places may be changed to create greater beauty, first by altering single points, then by altering a sequence of points, and finally by changing the area as a whole. How to create change on a holistic scale is to be GSD's next level of study.

Lee R. Skabelund ■



## Research Happenings

In conjunction with the Nongame Section of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Craig Johnson is working on a 4-year research project. In March of 1986, Craig began work on *A Wildlife Conservation Manual For Urbanizing Areas in Utah*.

The purpose of the manual is to educate decision-makers, planners, developers, architects, and landscape architects about the value of wildlife in urban environments. This is accomplished by providing in a concise and uncomplicated format information about how to incorporate wildlife conservation into planning, design, and regulatory processes.

The overall objective of the book is to develop a wildlife conservation planning process that can be integrated with other planning concerns. It will provide guidelines to county and community planning entities for the preparation of ordinances, regulations, performance standards, and incentive programs to protect and enhance existing wildlife habitat. An emphasis will be that wildlife habitat planning is compatible with other aspects of community development, such as stormwater drainage, wastewater treatment, recreation, and urban forestry.

Currently there is a lack of urban wildlife information relevant to the Intermountain West, and although the manual is specifically written for the western region, its emphasis on process will allow it to be used in other areas of the country.

# Places With Heart

In 1895 Scottish poet Jane Walsh Carlyle wrote, "The only thing that makes one place more attractive to me than another is the quantity of heart in it." Scholars, artists, architects, landscape architects, and others have continued to urge the creation of places that have heart, spirit, and personality. The creation of such places is especially important today as a counterbalance to our increasingly technological lifestyles.

Last month, USU landscape architecture students glimpsed the world of the environmental folk artist through a presentation entitled "Places With Heart." The folk art environment has a vivid spirit and personality which leaves a memorable impression with those who experience these places. Some folk art environments are so fascinating that many thousands of people are drawn to them each year.

By studying environmental folk art we can gain a better appreciation of the qualities which imbue a place with heart or spirit, and we can use these qualities in our own work as landscape architects. Especially significant are qualities of sound, motion, playfulness, symbolism, and mystery. The following excerpts from an article which will be published in an upcoming issue of *Landscape Architecture* magazine expand upon these five qualities so essential to our design vocabulary:

- Sound and motion go hand-in-hand with visual quality to make these places exciting. The folk art landscape is full of things that clang, tinkle, whisper, whirl, and sway in the wind. Windcatchers are made out of old bicycle tires and cream separators; colorful whirligigs are often humorously animated by the wind; mobiles and delicate handmade wind chimes hang from trees and building eaves. The windcatchers and whirligigs of two Washington folk artists are publicly displayed on the Grand Coulee highway and were installed in an award-winning whirligig compound under the state's Arts in Public Places program.

- The environmental folk artist has fun with the landscape. There is a wonderful playfulness and whimsical delight. Figures of animals are often humorously personified: giant concrete polar bears standing upright wave from a front yard; an eight-foot upright fox in a pink blouse bares his teeth at a silly grinning dinosaur; and a sly warthog peers from the rock crevice in which it was carved. A fantasyland atmosphere pervades in places where brightly painted martian-like figures courteously tip their hats good-day; where a zebra's body coils around a fence post and a concrete Pegasus emerges from an oleander bush.

Laughter is a universal balm, yet when is the last time you walked into a professionally designed place that really made you laugh? How often do we create a sense of humor and playfulness in our designs?

- Symbols pervade in the folk art environment. Symbols provide meaning, serve as unwritten messages, provoke emotion, tell a story or philosophy, and provide cultural or regional context.

Symbolism can be a powerful tool in landscape architectural design. Williams Square's bronze wild mustangs, long a symbol of Texans' independent spirit, are a good example. But

more often, the potential for providing meaning with symbols is underutilized.

- Folk art environments are intriguing places filled with mystery and wonderment. Imagine the curiosity of coming upon a several-acre compound completely surrounded by an eight-foot rock wall above which you see nothing but a dinosaur's head. Consider the mysteriousness of discovering a grassy field filled with giant wooden carvings standing like Easter Island sentinels. There is mystery, too, in the way the folk art environment changes as you move through it, often appearing to be one thing from a distance, but quite another as its rich detailing unfolds a more intricate story.

Mystery in the landscape has been identified by the Kaplan team as a key to highly desirable landscapes in visual assessment studies. Yet how well do we incorporate a sense of mystery, intrigue, and wonderment into our landscape design's larger fabric of legibility?

Inherent in all the folk art environments is a refreshing inventiveness that inspires us to explore new ideas of design and material usage. In a 1980 *Landscape Architecture* magazine article, Martha Schwartz urged landscape architects "to begin to question the use of traditional and limited images of the landscape and to make use of new ideas so badly needed in our profession."

People need places that stimulate imagination, emotion, and thought. Landscape architects can provide such places if we design them as both art and experience, and utilize powerful design tools such as sound, motion, playfulness symbolism, and mystery. As landscape architects, we can provide people with places that not only function, but that have heart, spirit, and personality as well.

Sue Sanborn □



The work of Folk Artist Nek Chand installed at the Capitol Children's museum in Washington D. C. Photo: H. Eastwood

# Bear

I saw a grizzly bear two years ago as it was walking along the side of the Yellowstone River at Fishing Bridge just below Yellowstone Lake. It turned over a rotting log breaking it in half, briefly charged a bison, crossed the highway, then swam across the river and disappeared around the bend and was gone. I never saw it again. It left tracks in the soft sand along the river which would have shown anyone with the time and inclination to look exactly where it had passed, what it had done, where it had come from, and where it had gone. I stopped at the same place the next day to examine those tracks, but already they had begun to deteriorate. Some were still very well preserved, the creases still evident in the pads. But most were now only depressions, the regularity of their spacing the only clue to the fact that a living creature had made them.

It often seems that the grizzly bear is as ephemeral in Yellowstone as are its tracks. Inevitably, conversations in the Park turn to the bear. "Have you seen any bears?" is a universal greeting, and "where are all the bears?" is one of the most common questions park rangers deal with. It is obvious that the grizzly bear is one of the strongest symbols of Yellowstone National Park, yet it is a symbol that may be disappearing. The grizzly population in Yellowstone is estimated at 150-200 bears. That figure is down from a count of 245 grizzlies in 1967. Even more foreboding is the downward trend in the number of female grizzlies with cubs observed. Grizzly reproductive biology and social behavior make this figure a crucial one in determining the future of the population. It has fallen from an average of 49 in 1958 to 33 in 1980.

The decline of the Yellowstone grizzly population is due in part to the Park Service's decision in 1970 to remove its open pit garbage dumps. These dumps had been in place since the 1920's and had come to be an important supplemental food source for bears. A sharp increase in the number of grizzly deaths following the closures seems to support predictions by some that abrupt closure of the dumps would have a detrimental effect. A large part of that increase came from "control deaths" of bears which became nuisances by foraging in campgrounds and endangering human lives.

If the grizzly bear would simply stay within the Park, its survival might not be in question. Unfortunately, the bear does not recognize political boundaries. But those boundaries have a profound effect on its life. Yellowstone National Park comprises only part of what has come to be known as the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (GYE). Management of the GYE is shared by at least five federal agencies, three states, several counties, and dozens of municipalities. Its management is dictated by a morass of federal and state laws including the Yellowstone National Park organic act, Federal Land Policy and Management Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, Wilderness Act, the Mining Act of 1872, and on and on. There are many competing uses of land surrounding the Park and few of them are compatible with grizzly bears.

Political sentiments in the area surrounding the Park range from isolated acceptance of the bear to ambivalence to

outright resentment and hostility. Not surprisingly, the public attitude toward the bear is a function of its potential or perceived impact on the local economy. Communities with extractive resource or agriculture based economies tend to resent the bear-often violently-since its presence influences the way in which public lands are managed. There are other pressures on these economies, however, and many of them are beginning to convert



to recreation as an economic base, with the Park being the major draw.

Recreation based economies such as Jackson tend to be more accepting toward the bear, with one very notable exception. The public mood of Cody, Wyoming toward the grizzly is very negative. The basis for this sentiment is the ongoing controversy over the removal of the facilities at Fishing Bridge within the Park.



Photo by Paul H. Larsen

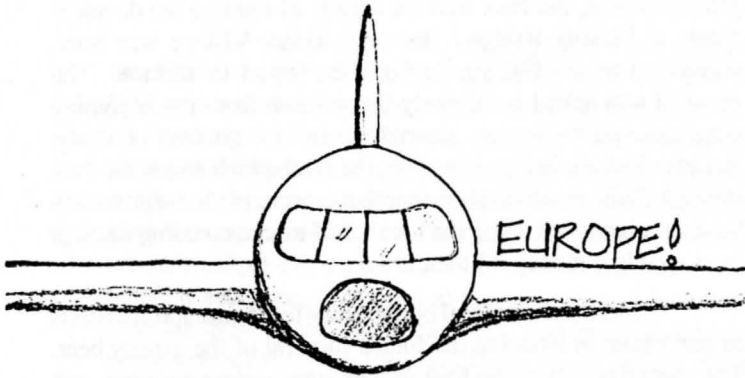
As mitigation for planned facilities at Grant Village in prime grizzly habitat, the Park Service agreed to remove the developments at Fishing Bridge. But once Grant Village was built, opposition to the Fishing Bridge plan began to surface. The removal was halted indefinitely by pressure from the Wyoming congressional delegation spurred on by the citizens of Cody. Because Fishing Bridge lies along the road which enters the Park through Cody, residents there fear that closure of the facilities will have an adverse effect on the number of tourists passing through (and spending money in) their town.

There is a very real opportunity for landscape architects to participate in ensuring the future survival of the grizzly bear. The special nature of the Park and its surrounding environs, and their competing uses and politics lend themselves well to the planning and design processes used in the profession. But one thing is clear—an innovative approach is needed or the prognosis is grim. One route might be a shift in the current philosophy of management of both Park Service and Forest Service lands in the GYE. Some proposals have dealt with supplemental feeding programs within the park to concentrate bears away from humans and avoid grizzly-human interactions which often result in control deaths. Others have proposed privatization under stewardship groups such as the Sierra Club or the Nature Conservancy for sensitive Forest Service lands surrounding the Park.

No program will be wholly effective however until there is a mood of acceptance for the bear in communities within the GYE. One way to accomplish this might be to provide the grizzly with an economic worth. Because economic benefits from wildlife are difficult to quantify, traditional cost/benefit analyses tend to favor extractive uses such as timber or mining and recreational uses such as skiing or snowmobiling with easily identifiable economic benefits over non-consumptive uses such as wilderness or wildlife habitat. New analytical techniques could be developed to provide a more realistic assessment of the worth of the grizzly bear. Alternatively, it may be possible to undertake projects which would actually increase the worth of the bear and change its perception in affected communities from that of a liability to an asset. Research into visitor preferences and attitudes in the past has shown that the presence of the Grizzly in the Park is an attraction. Knowing what that attraction translates into in terms of dollars might provide managers with a more effective tool to convince surrounding communities that perpetuation of a healthy population of grizzlies is a matter of economic prudence rather than just a purely esthetic concern.

There is ample cause for those of us who are interested in the application of landscape architectural knowledge in the area of grizzly bear management to be excited about the future and to make meaningful contributions. But we need to start now. Without a real and concerted effort by all those involved, the possibility exists that the Yellowstone of the twenty-first century will be a Yellowstone in which the memory of the grizzly bear will be like tracks in the wet sand. Those tracks will inevitably fade and disappear with the passing of each wave of time until nothing remains but a smooth, barren surface. We will all be poorer then.

Paul H. Larsen ☐



## Europe '88!

As fall quarter zooms by there are a few students whose thoughts fly to spring quarter and ten weeks in England and Europe. (Look for them in the halls - they're the ones with starry eyes, and passports in their back pockets.)

Trip coordinator and pilot Mike Timmons is busy planning and plotting. He held an update session on November 24th to let us know the state of affairs. The rough outline is:

- 7 weeks in England, including about 2 weeks of travel in short trips
- 1 week in France, mainly Paris
- 2 weeks in East and West Germany

While in England, we will be at Thames Polytechnic Institute near London, receiving lectures in British and working on small projects. This will be broken up with short trips to the south and north . . . and a few trips to the pub! Mike is a veteran traveller and is planning a potpourri of stops - everything from classic gardens and squares to museums and architecture.

Travels on the continent will start in France and include 3 or 4 days in Paris. We will sip Pernod on the Champs d'Ellysees, stroll Versailles, and visit the Louvre. From there we will be on a circuit tour of Germany. Scheduled stops are in Hannover, Erlangen, The Romantic Road region, Munich, Stuttgart, and Frankfurt. We will connect with John Nicholson and stretch our legs in East Germany.

All of these activities will take us through to late May. Some students will return for graduation, while others may continue in Europe on their own, perhaps to Italy or Spain . . .

Deposits are due very soon and we will have to put our money where our passports are. After that, Mike will be able to start paying for our bookings and confirming reservations. The projected cost is \$3,000 not including tuition - a fair deal for a bit of international education.

Greg Shymanski ☐

## Landscape Ecology Comes to Utah

Professor Richard Forman, a leader in the emerging field of landscape ecology, visited the Utah State campus November 18 and 19. The co-author of *Landscape Ecology* gave two lectures at the invitation of USU's Ecology Center and spoke briefly at an LAEP reception. Professor Forman was an ecologist at Rutgers University for many years before joining the landscape architecture faculty at Harvard two years ago. He talked informally to the LAEP Department about ongoing projects and interests at Harvard, and then explained a bit about landscape ecology.

For many years as a researcher, Dr. Forman studied working within distinct ecosystems. The more he studied them, the more he came to realize that the most important things about ecosystems are their interactions with the systems and elements - the landscapes - that surround them. Thus he began to study landscapes as interacting ecosystems which included human-made as well as natural elements.

Landscape ecology has been a topic of study in Europe since the middle of this century, but it has only recently gained attention in the U.S. Its theories may not seem new to landscape architects, who deal on a daily basis with the holistic nature of landscapes, but for the more narrowly-focused researchers in ecology, they represent an entirely different way of looking at the world. The subject is controversial!

Forman and co-author Michel Godron analyze a landscape in terms of three elements: patches, corridors, and the matrix in which they exist. These elements may be found in any landscape, from pristine natural areas to suburban housing developments. A major area of study includes the interactions between landscape elements, and subsequent effects on the plants, animals, and humans within them.

Forman sees much promise in landscape ecology as the theoretical basis for resource management. First, the emphasis on interactions between landscape elements more accurately addresses the scale and nature of resource issues. Second, the definitions of landscape ecology are purposely simple. This provides a common language so that everyone - conservation biologists, resource managers, landscape planners, and policy-makers - can understand and discuss landscape issues from a common foundation. Finally, in its capacity for considering both natural and human processes, landscape ecology holds real promise for tackling the natural resource preservation-versus-development issues that are a growing concern in landscape architecture.

S. Nordstrom ☐

*"As you practice analysis you are fine-tuning your individual intuition; you more readily recognize indicators of concern as you diagnose the health of the environment."*

Gerry Smith

# Gerry Smith

On October 27, 1987, Gerry Smith, Department Head of Landscape Architecture at Cal Poly San Louis Obispo, presented a slide-tape presentation which documented student work from a recent travel-study program to Japan. The five key garden design elements students analyzed were 1) *awareness and translation of nature*, 2) *irregular order and process*, 3) *spatial relationships*, 4) *controlled viewer position*, and 5) *borrowed scenery*. These concepts brought to mind a principle from landscape history: One cannot merely borrow forms and ideas and apply them arbitrarily but must capture the essence of those elements and fit them with the specific project being studied.

The following day, Gerry directed an informal seminar entitled, "The Emerging Directions in Landscape Architecture." He began the discussion by saying that in California, more and more landscape architects are involved in design/build and experimentation with new materials and construction methodology - factors resulting from the ever increasing demands for housing and efficiency.

Mike Timmons interjected that one new direction of the profession is in reworking old, deteriorating urban sites. This is especially true in England, where Mike was on sabbatical two years ago. Landscape architects are doing more site rehabilitation as less undeveloped land is available. According to Smith, there is a growing tendency for developers to hire interdisciplinary landscape planning teams of architects, engineers, ecologists, social scientists, etc. As landscape architects we have the generalized training that will help coordinate communication within these design teams.

Gerry Smith concluded the seminar by reminding us "that we did not inherit the landscape—we are borrowing the landscape from our children."

Vaughn Furness ■

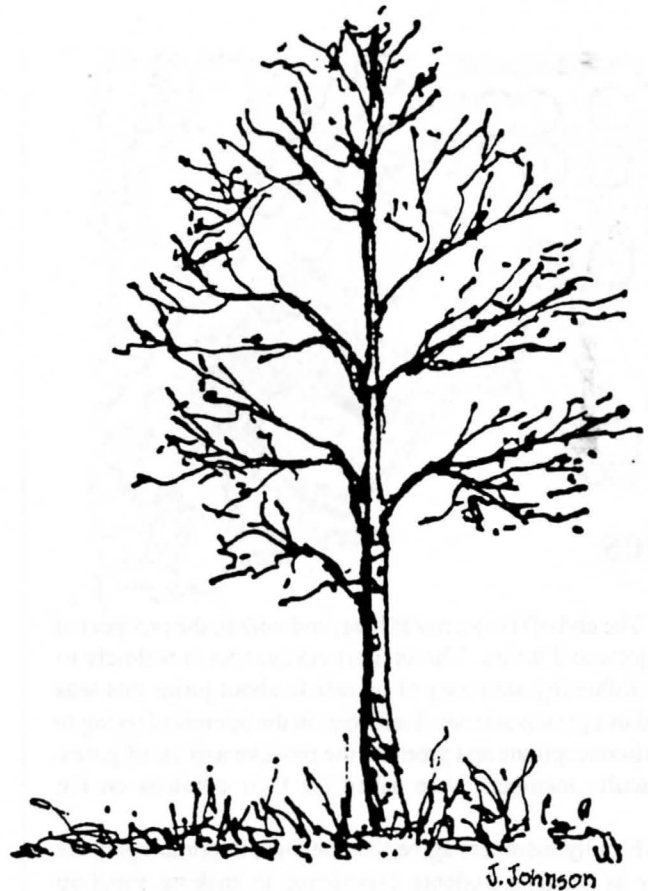
## Stay Tuned for ASLA Events!

Happy Holidays!

It's time to start looking forward to Winter Quarter, and ASLA is planning activities to help brighten the studio mood. Plans on the board now include snow sculpturing, studio jeopardy, LAEP trivia, and department-wide sketch problems, to name just a few.

Also, be on the lookout for LAEP Week. Dates, speakers, and activities will be announced soon. The LAEP Department has hosted some of the world's most influential landscape architects in LAEP Weeks past, and this year promises to live up to previous standards. Possible speakers come from diverse backgrounds in modern garden design, ecology, historic preservation, and graphics instruction. So stay tuned, there are many more good things to come.

Malin Francis  
Kathlyn Collins ■



## Thinking About Grad School

While visiting Utah State, Carl Steinitz spoke with a few students about graduate school. A few of his ideas are joined here with some thoughts Dick Toth offered earlier this quarter:

1) Letters of reference play a vital role because faculty at the prospective graduate schools they are sent to generally know and trust the appraisal of the USU faculty members.

2) The portfolio should contain only those pieces of work we are proud of, written or graphic. Project descriptions should be concise and dated by year, with credit given to professors and classmates as appropriate. A table of contents is helpful. Layout and looks are critical.

3) GRE scores predict poor students, not necessarily great ones. Grades are important only in terms of the direction they have moved. Grad schools look most closely at your last 45 credits.

4) Timing (ie. when one wishes to attend grad school) must meet an individuals' experience level, a decision about the particular area we wish to pursue, and personal and family desires and needs.

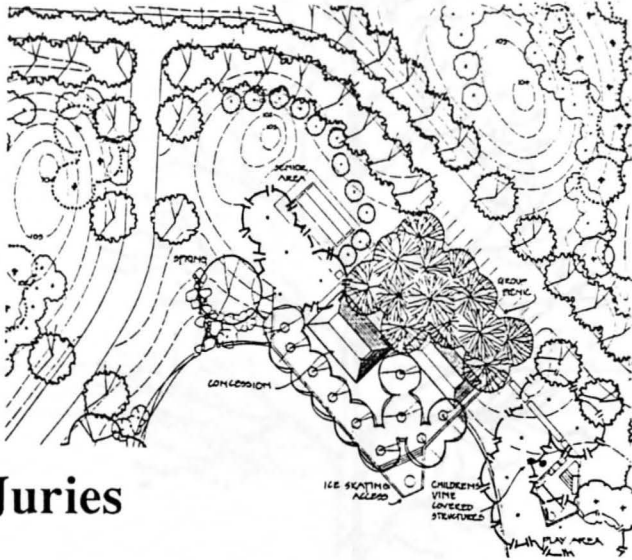
5) Graduate work extends the scope of potential employment in public, private, and, especially, academic realms. Increased income may be a further outcome.



What do all these places have in common?

Aspen  
Denver  
Fort Worth  
Dallas  
New Orleans  
Memphis  
Nashville  
Atlanta  
Orlando  
Miami  
Fort Lauderdale  
Washington D.C.  
New York  
Boston  
Montreal  
Toronto  
Niagra Falls  
Chicago  
St. Paul  
Mount Rushmore  
Rapid City  
Helena  
Portland  
Seattle  
Victoria  
Vancouver Island  
San Francisco  
Los Angeles  
San Diego  
Tijuana  
Grand Canyon  
Logan

*Ask Noriah, Doriah, Aini, Norani, or Huda. . . they did them all in 33 days. . . through their eyes. . . different cultures in one. . . different landscapes. . . different lives.*



## Juries

The end of the quarter is here, and with it, the prospect of final projects and juries. The *In-Sites* editors feel it is timely to offer the following summary of an article about juries that was published in a previous issue. Last year, in the interest of trying to clarify misconceptions and promote the positive aspects of juries, LAEP faculty members were asked for their opinions on the subject.

Faculty members agree that the most important purpose of a jury is to give students experience in making stand-up presentations of their ideas. As a simulation of a "real-world" setting, the jury offers an opportunity to learn to organize ideas, speak confidently in front of people, and become accustomed to the pressure that often accompanies such an exercise. In addition to design, graphic, and technical know-how, the ability to communicate ideas verbally is a skill essential to landscape architecture.

Several suggestions were offered by the faculty on ways to improve your performance in a jury, and to learn as much as you can from the experience. First, take the jury seriously. Accept the responsibility to conduct yourself in a professional manner and, most importantly, maintain an openness to comment and criticism. The professors are interested in critiquing the ideas and the work: not you as a person. This is intended to be an open discussion and not a confrontation. Avoid defensive behavior, and concentrate on listening and responding to the comments made by the jury and fellow students.

Take the time to prepare your presentation. Design the whole presentation, just as you would a project. Organize your thoughts. Make sure they flow logically, and that each statement you make serves a purpose. Abstract the essence of your project. Identify the problems of the project as you perceived them, and tell the jury how you tried to solve them. Keep the presentation as brief as possible. Practice it first!

The opportunity to present your work carries with it the responsibility to listen to your teachers and colleagues. The jury is an activity in which real learning and sharing of ideas can take place. In addition, you gain in juries the chance to improve your public speaking skills and to work at becoming a more effective landscape architect. Carry a positive attitude with you into the jury, and take advantage of the many opportunities it presents.

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