

Sustainable Building Coalition

P.O. Box 49381
Austin, TX 78767-9381

Next Meeting:
Friday
January 24, 2003
Casa de Luz
7:00 p.m.



January 2003

<http://www.greenbuilder.com/sbc>

Volume 10, Issue 1

In This Issue:

- New Newsletter Format
- UT Informal Classes
- USGBC Conference Report
- Green Building Program Honored
- News

Announcements:

■ Deadline for articles, events, and info for the next newsletter is February 15. Email to cdgaines@yahoo.com

■ A new start! SBC will be reinstating dues for the organization. Please pay these by February 21st.

■ Give me your tired, poor *books*, your huddled *resources* yearning to breathe free! Donate used materials to the SBC lending library.

Website Resources:

www.informalclasses.org
www.keeapaustinbeautiful.org
www.bshf.org

Upcoming Workshop:

Date still to be set in the next couple of months. A retrofit of an existing structure with strawbale walls and leichtlehmbau (light clay/straw) walls in Bastrop County. If interested, leave your name & number on my voice mail 490-8797 or email me at frinehart@hotmail.com and I will keep you posted as to the date.

Next Meeting: "Life in Architecture" by Nikos Salingaros

Is it possible to mimic properties of living form in man-made constructions? I am not referring to a superficial copying of "organic" form, but to deeper qualities that have to do with how matter is put together to create a unified whole. The greatest periods of both vernacular and historical architectures produced buildings and portions of the urban fabric that had an identifiable "life". We can connect to those structures in a similar way we connect to a living form; only the degree of connection is less. Civilization utilized this property to build public spaces, religious buildings, and their own dwellings so as to give positive emotional feedback from our built surroundings.

The Twentieth century saw a rabid, fanatical destruction of any structure that had "life", which also turned mankind against biological living forms as well. The concept of "architectural life" was ridiculed and suppressed at the same time. Christopher Alexander has spent his career finding the properties that can endow structures with architectural life, and we are ready to present those results now to the world. At the next meeting, Nikos Salingaros of the University of Texas in San Antonio will give a presentation on this and more.

Welcome to a New Year, SBC!!

By Katie Jensen

Happy New Year, everyone, and welcome back to the Sustainable Building Coalition! I'm sure there's been a lot of talk, lately, as you've started getting a few more notices about SBC events, meetings, and now, you're receiving the first newsletter that's been put together in over a year and a half! I bet you're wondering what's going on! Well, let me tell you... a lot!

[Continued on page 2]

Topic of the Month: "New" Newsletter Publisher & Format

By Chris Maxwell-Gaines

I want to take this opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Chris Maxwell-Gaines and I have volunteered to be the newsletter publisher for SBC. My wife and I have recently returned from service in the Peace Corps and we are new to Austin (even though we grew up in Cameron, TX). So on to the newsletter! The organizers of SBC want the newsletter to be a very collaborative effort by the members of SBC. We believe that the newsletter should be a disseminating tool of information from those of us who have some information to everyone else (other members and people who happen to get their hands and eyes on the newsletter). We want the newsletter to focus on the Austin area, but we also want to bring in some issues affecting our national and international community. [Continued on page 4]

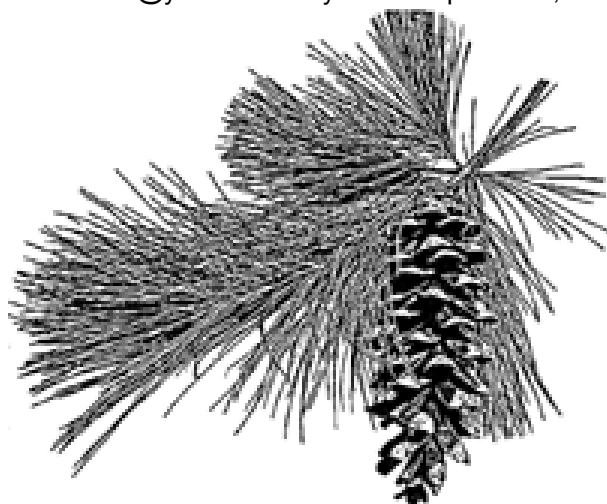
Welcome [Continued]

In the past year and a half, Paul McCutchen has been diligently keeping you all informed about green building in the area and has organized numerous tours at homes in the area. Thanks so much to him and to the many homeowners who have graciously opened their homes to so many members. Ken MacKenzie has also put a lot of effort into video taping these tours, capturing lessons learned and bits of wisdom from the architects, builders, and home owners we visited. He hopes to be able to make them available for public viewing in the future. Thanks also to all of you who have continued to talk the talk and walk the walk when it comes to sustainable building and living in your businesses and everyday lives!

The Sustainable Building Coalition was blessed with two member meetings in the same busy week in late November. Carol Venolia, Architect, author, and columnist in *Natural Home* magazine, was able to extend her visit from her home in Santa Rosa, CA. She joined us in a discussion on sustainable design and suggested there is more to ecological building than energy-efficiency and using the right materials; it must reunite us with the living world. Dalmara Bayne, author of a book on wholistic healing, shared with us how she incorporates her studies and expertise as a Naturopathic Doctor with a Master's Degree in Environmental Planning and Design into her work in Wimberley, TX.

In order to not overwhelm ourselves, we are going to walk before we run. Meetings and newsletters may be a little more spread out than they were in the past, but hopefully we will be able to fit in more hands-on opportunities and other types of learning activities. Please note January's Friday meeting is irregular. Future SBC meetings will be scheduled for the fourth Wednesday of every other month. SBAT and SBC have reserved the Cielo Room at the Casa de Luz campus at 1701 Toomey Road in Austin for the fourth Tuesday of every month. We will take turns (every other month) hosting meetings during this time slot. Please watch the *Events* page on the web site and your in box for upcoming meetings and other SBC events.

I'm really looking forward to the year to come and all that it will bring for the Sustainable Building Coalition, its members, its programs, and green building in the region. Please feel free to email me at ski4katie@yahoo.com if you have questions, comments, or suggestions. ■



Local News

SBC & SBAT SEEKING JOINT NON-PROFIT STATUS

By Gayle Borst

One of the primary goals set at the SBC re-organizational meeting back in the fall of 2001 was to obtain an official non-profit status. It was felt by many members that we must make this commitment in order to obtain grants and donations in pursuit of a more effective, action-based educational agenda.

Several years ago, in response to the demand for more and more information about straw bale building, a handful of SBC members and others formed the Straw Bale Association of Texas (SBAT). Now, the SBAT and SBC are

in the process of coming back together under a single nonprofit umbrella in order to reinforce our common connections and enhance the pursuits of each group.

Once under that umbrella, both SBC and SBAT will continue much as before, but with increased credibility with other nonprofits and commercial organizations, plus the ability to apply for grants to do bigger and better things. Lastly, people and organizations who donate money and materials to SBC and SBAT will be able to deduct the value of their donations from their taxes (as applicable by law).

Under the guidance of SBAT's (and now SBC's) Greg Camacho, a small group of SBC and SBAT members are meeting regularly to bring the nonprofit status goal into reality. Goals and mission have been drafted, bylaws are being written, and we have engaged the services of a nonprofit organizational professional to guide us through the bureaucratic quagmire. It is hoped that our application will be ready by the middle of February 2003 (yes, this year!). For more information, contact Greg Camacho at gcamacho@austin.rr.com ■

**GREEN BUILDING PROGRAM HONORED BY
BSH FOUNDATION**
By Chris Maxwell-Gaines

City of Austin's Green Building Program was one of the ten finalists for the Building and Social Housing Foundation's World Habitat Award 2002. The Awards are presented each year at the global celebration of World Habitat Day. This is organized each year on the first Monday of October by the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), providing a unique opportunity to focus attention on the importance of shelter in people's lives. The winners of the award were the Setagaya-ku Fukasawa Symbiotic Housing in Japan and the Architects in the Community Program in Cuba.

Examples of the ten finalists are a project built in 1979 to successfully demonstrate the use of adobe constructed homes in earthquake zones of Guatemala, and a community housing initiative in South Africa which uses density layouts of two storied houses to break away from the traditional low density sprawl development of South African housing for the poor. Another example is a Zero Energy Development of 82 dwelling units and 2,500 square meters of office space located on a brownfield site in South London that achieves the zero energy status by energy efficient design of the buildings, use of energy efficient appliances, use of renewable energy sources, passive stack ventilation systems, and a green transport plan.

The World Habitat Award is open to any individual, organization or government who has an innovative and practical solution to housing problems and needs from any country of the world. The committee's criteria for the submission of a project is that it demonstrates practical, innovative and sustainable solutions to current housing needs and problems, capable of being financially self-supporting or of attracting private or public funding, can be replicated elsewhere in the developed or developing world as appropriate, and views the term habitat from a broad perspective. Go to <http://www.bshf.org> for more info. ■



U.S. GREEN BUILDING CONFERENCE

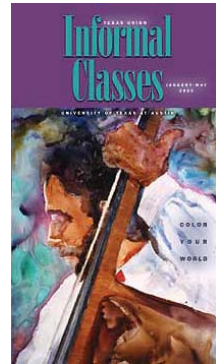
By Chris Maxwell-Gaines

More than 4,000 green building aficionados gathered in Austin, Texas from the 12th of November to the 16th at the U.S. Green Building Council's 1st Annual International Conference and Exposition. At the opening plenary session, thousands of attendees were treated to an inspirational message delivered by noted author and award-winning scientist Dr. David Suzuki. Nearly 80 breakout sessions filled to capacity and the gala dinner provided an exciting evening that included the announcement of the USGBC Leadership Awards recipients. Throughout the week, an impressive group of exhibitors stayed busy talking with an exhibit hall filled with attendees and took advantage of the media turnout by making new product announcements. Over 4000 registrants, 10 new USGBC provisional chapters and affiliates, 200 industry newcomers attending the Young Professionals Forum and the formal ratification of the World Green Building Council, are only a few of the indicators that support the speculation that green building practices are approaching mainstream. ■

Sustainable Design Informal Classes at UT

There are a couple of informal classes being offered at UT this spring that may be of interest to some of our members. For more information and to register, go to <http://www.informalclasses.org>, click on Spring 2003 Catalog and type in the course name to get course number, price, etc. that you will need to register.

- **Solar Home Design** taught by Paul Breaux. It consists of 2 meetings (Two Thursdays, Feb. 13-20, 6:30-8:30pm) and 1 field trip (Saturday, Feb. 22, TBA).
- **Green Gardening** taught by Elizabeth Drozda-Freeman. It consists of 3 meetings (Saturday, Mar. 22, 10am-5pm & Sundays, Mar. 23-30, 1-5pm).
- **Feng Shui** taught by Nancy Wesson. It consists of only 1 meeting but two times this spring (Feb. 6 or May 1, 6-10pm). ■



Local Happenings



Keep Austin Beautiful's 18th Annual Awards Luncheon is coming up. A record number of nominations have been received this year that applaud the efforts of individuals and companies who love our community and show it through their efforts to keep it clean and beautiful! The winners are selected for recognition at the 18th Annual Keep Austin Beautiful Awards Luncheon.

A VIP reception and silent auction will open the event. Jim Spencer, Austin's favorite weatherman" and KXAN-TV personality, will be Master of Ceremonies for the 18th annual luncheon. Won't you join us for this very special event? For reservations or more information, call Keep Austin Beautiful at 974-3577. We accept Visa and Mastercard. Go to <http://www.KeepAustinBeautiful.org> for more information. ■

- Where: Hyatt Regency Hotel on Town lake
- When: Wed., Feb. 12, 2003
- Time: 11:00 to 1:30 pm
- Price: \$30 per ticket or sponsorship of tables of 8 for \$500

Topic of the Month [Continued]

So to accomplish these goals, I need your help. Of greatest importance is news of sustainable building efforts here in Austin. Since so many of our members are associated with and involved in a myriad of activities in the local area, we want you to share some of the news, events, and information that you think will be of interest to the members of SBC. In the newsletters, we will have articles recounting the previous month's speaker and meeting notes so that if, by chance, you missed it, you can catch up on what happened. Here is some of the other sections we are thinking about including in future issues of the newsletter. For each of these sections to provide the most effective content, we want anyone who wants to be involved to submit ideas and information. All ideas and information must be submitted to cdgaines@yahoo.com before the assigned deadline date published in the previous newsletter.

1. **Topic of the Month** - Topic and article prepared by someone knowledgeable of the topic (plus resources to continue learning about the topic).
2. **Progress Report: Green Building Technologies** - This section will discuss a particular green building technology, its background, uses, statistics from manufacturers, future outlook, etc. This will highlight a different technology each newsletter.
3. **Ushering in the Sustainable Economy** - Sustainable Building is not an isolated endeavor. The widespread acceptability of these technologies needs to be supported by a change in our national and world economy. This section will discuss ways to support the shift to a sustainable economy.

4. **International Sustainable Building Practices and Trends** - Green building technologies do not need to be high-tech. Some of the best technologies are simple and in order to introduce them, we need to share examples of the technology working in the real world. We need to widen our perspective. This section will highlight international examples of sustainable building practices and trends.
5. **Book reviews** – Member reviews of books related to sustainability will be included in the newsletter.
6. **Regular columns from people** – If someone has an idea for a regular column pertaining to issues of sustainable building and is willing to produce it, we can publish it within this newsletter. ■

National News

MINNESOTA SALVAGE OPERATION YIELDS PRIZED BUILDING MATERIALS

Excerpted from Mary Lynn Smith of the Minneapolis Star Tribune, Dec. 13, 2002



REUSE

An ammunition plant in Arden Hills, Minnesota, is being dismantled beam by beam, and nearly everything, including the land, is destined for a new life. The Army, which operated the plant during World War II and into the Vietnam era, turned over the abandoned 10-acre plant and 39 acres to Ramsey County, which is making the most of the salvage operation. Nearly 20,000 square feet of refurbished maple tongue-and-groove flooring will be installed in 36 low-cost apartments, four affordable homes and a community center.

Peter Krieger of Duluth Timber Co. is awaiting 500,000 board feet of timber from beams that are as long as 18 feet and weigh between 300 and 400 pounds. "It's prized timber," he said. "It's coastal Douglas fir that was cut down in the '40s and dried slowly in the building." Scrap wood, meanwhile, will be ground into mulch for landscaping and fuel for St. Paul's District Energy plant. And scrap metal will be melted and copper wiring and electrical components salvaged. A generation ago, most of the building would have ended up in a landfill, said Bruce Thompson, assistant Ramsey County property management director. To put it in the landfill today would cost the county \$600,000. Instead, dismantling and salvaging the building will cost \$183,000. ■

SPRAWL REPORT RANKS THE BEST AND WORST U.S. CITIES

Excerpted from Ross Atkin of the Christian Science Monitor, Dec. 4, 2002

The advocacy group Smart Growth America recently released a report, titled "Measuring Sprawl and its Impacts," that ranks 83 major metropolitan areas in four major categories: by residential density, by how well they incorporate a mix of homes, jobs and services; by the strength of their downtowns and town centers; and by how interconnected their streets are. Sprawl is unplanned urban growth that happens outside the existing infrastructure. The amount of land that's built upon isn't the point; the way it's used is. In Omaha, for instance, which ranked sixth in the least-sprawling ratings, there's room to spread out, and the city does (it has a below-average residential density). But it scores well with its active, vibrant downtown and smaller commercial districts, and for its mix of housing, shopping and offices. [<http://www.smartgrowthamerica.com/sprawlindex/sprawlindex.html>] ■



Areas with the most sprawl:

1. Riverside-San Bernardino, CA
2. Greensboro-Winston-Salem, NC
3. Raleigh-Durham, NC
4. Atlanta, GA
5. Greenville-Spartanburg, SC
6. West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL
7. Bridgeport-Stamford-Norwalk, CT
8. Knoxville, TN
9. Oxnard-Ventura, CA
10. Fort Worth-Arlington, TX

Areas with the least sprawl:

1. New York, NY
2. Jersey City, NJ
3. Providence, RI
4. San Francisco, CA
5. Honolulu, HI
6. Omaha, NE
7. Boston, MA
8. Portland, OR
9. Miami, FL
10. New Orleans, LA

The Back Page: DUES!!

In order to begin offering workshops, meetings, newsletters, and the other services that the coordinators of SBC provide for you, our members, we will start collecting dues again. We have looked at how funds were needed over the past few years and considered our desire to reduce the use of our paper resources by publishing newsletters on the web. This has allowed us to alter the dues scale a bit in your favor. If you would like to further support the organization, please feel free to do so through direct donation to the organization. When we obtain the non-profit status we are seeking from the IRS, these donations will be tax-deductible. We will let you know as more information becomes available on this topic. Until then, we appreciate your continued support! Checks made out to Sustainable Building Coalition may be mailed to P.O. Box 49381, Austin, Texas, 78767-9381 (please write "dues" in the subject line). We will also be collecting them at the member meeting on Friday, January 24.

- \$15 Regular membership (includes email newsletter)
- \$25 Regular membership (includes paper / mailed newsletter)
- \$35 Business membership (advertising, recognition, networking, and more)

Coordinators:

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Treasurer & Book Seller: Frieda Rinehart (512-490-8797)

Education: Paul McCutchen

If you would like to contact anyone of us by email, visit the contact form on the Greenbuilder website at:
<http://www.greenbuilder.com/sbc/contact/>

SUSTAINABLE BUILDING COALITION

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