

Sustainable Building Coalition

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

Next Meeting:
Wednesday
March 26, 2003
7:00 pm
Casa de Luz
1701 Toomey Road



March 2003

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

Volume 10, Issue 2

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Announcements:

- * Deadline for articles and events for the next newsletter is April 15. Email to Chris at cdgaines@yahoo.com
- * If you have not done it yet, send in your dues to SBC. Please pay these as soon as possible. Check out the SBC website for info on membership.
- * Check out the calendar on the website for upcoming workshops and events!!

Upcoming Workshops:

- Volunteer at Tomko Home
- Photovoltaic Design and Installation Workshop
- Fundamentals in Permaculture Class
- Women's Photovoltaic Design and Installation
- Lama Foundation's Annual Green Building Workshops
- Keep Austin Beautiful's 18th Annual Town Lake Cleanup

Website Resources:

www.greenbuilder.com/sbc
www.katarxis.com
www.patternlanguage.com
www.austinparks.org
www.austincleanenergy.org

Next Meeting: "Experience with Green Building Materials"

By Mark Kohlhaas

My name is Mark Kohlhaas. I have been employed by a local organization called American YouthWorks (AYW) for 5 ½ years. We are a non-profit charter school located in downtown Austin. Specifically, I work with Casa Verde Builders (CVB), a part of AYW that teaches green building to mostly at-risk youth. In the process of teaching, we build affordable houses in east Austin using a wide variety of green building materials.

One of the main challenges associated with green building is being able to actually get the materials. Recently, I compiled a list of materials and contractors the Casa Verde Builders use or have used, along with information on where to find them. This list will soon be available on the Sustainable Building Coalition website. The intention is that this will be a living list, one that is kept current with contact information on where to find the materials and experiences of those who have worked with them. At the next SBC meeting, I will be one of the presenters discussing green building materials and their local availability.

Working with CVB, I have had the luxury of getting hands-on experience with most of the materials on the list. Starting in the next newsletter, I will be writing a column outlining my experience with some of these products. We are hoping to get input from readers of the newsletter who have also used these materials or something similar. We would also love to have others contribute entire articles if possible. Ultimately, we would like to keep all of this information on the SBC website as it accumulates as a helpful resource for SBC members and others. I look forward to seeing you at the upcoming member meeting on March 26th.

Please join Mark and a staff member from the Green Building Program to learn more about green building materials that are available locally. SBC meets the 4th Wednesday of every other month (next meeting will be March 26th) at 7 pm at Casa de Luz (<http://www.casadeluz.org/>), 1701 Toomey Road in the Cielo Room. You're also welcome to join us at Casa de Luz for a wonderful holistic meal beginning at 6 pm. *

Life in Buildings: January Member Meeting

By Chris Maxwell-Gaines

Dr. Nikos Salingaros, Professor of Mathematics at the University of Texas at Houston joined a captive audience of SBC members and guests the evening of Thursday, Jan. 24 at Casa de Luz. Dr. Salingaros' research and study is in demonstrating the quality of life in buildings and the environment through mathematics. Congruent with this interest, Dr. Salingaros has been working with Dr. Christopher Alexander, Architect and Mathematician, to edit the latest series of Alexander's books, "The Nature of Order." Other texts by Alexander include "A Pattern Language" and "Human Identity in the Urban Environment."

The presentation began with the idea that we connect with and receive similar life-giving feelings from inanimate objects (buildings, rocks, etc) just as we connect with animate beings.

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"The coalition exists to facilitate the organization and education of the building and design communities and the general public to foster: healthy and ecologically sound built environments + sustainable resource use + responsible and healthy businesses."

January Member Meeting [Continued]

In order for this to happen in the built environment, *life* needs to be *built* into buildings. Dr. Salingaros suggested also that the actual act of building, or creating one's space, gives life back to the builder.

In order to look at the built environment in a mathematic or quantitative manner, Dr. Salingaros explained the hierarchy of scales. Things happen on different scales, where they interact on varying levels in very complex ways. These scales range from the grain of a wood floor to the expanse of a room to the immenseness of a neighborhood, city, region, etc. For a building to give back life to those who interact with it, it must reflect all of the scales that humans can perceive. When these scales harmonize, it creates an atmosphere of life, or wholeness, in the building.

All of Dr. Salingaros' published papers are on the internet, if you just search for his name on any search engine. His main website is www.math.utsa.edu/sphere/salingar/. Soon he will assist the editing of a new magazine called, *Katarxis*, which will be devoted to Architecture and Urbanism, available at www.katarxis.com. Christopher Alexander's work can be found at www.patternlanguage.com. *

Local Happenings: "Earth Day and It's Your Park"

By Brandi Clark

Earth Day

After a one-year lapse, Austin's Earth Day is back! April is fast approaching, and preparations are underway to plan an Earth Day Expo that will include old friends and reach new audiences as well. This year's Earth Day Expo will take place on the western side of Auditorium shores and will be one part of a larger two-day Austin ParksFest, hosted by the Austin Parks Foundation. Running races, a BBQ contest and the first Capital 2k Open Water Swim will be held in Town Lake. The Expo will feature themed pavilions on water (the national Earth Day theme), renewable energy, and healthy home and office. Our live music stage will feature Sara Hickman and other outstanding local musicians.



Building on a sustainable legacy

The last big Earth Day Festival we held in Austin set the benchmark for clean, green events. In fact, we won local and statewide awards for being a model of sustainability. With approximately 100 booths, 10 performances, 10 food/drink vendors, 7 workshops, and around 5000 attendees, the festival generated only one cubic yard of trash, and about 1 ton of material that was recycled and turned into compost. Strategies for another successful event will include: using a solar generator to power the concert, children's fair, and a stage; providing reusable cups as well as biodegradable cups, plates, utensils and trash bags from Biocorp; composting and recycling wastes; offering event t-shirts, bags and other gear made from recycled materials; promoting energy efficient transportation to the event; and providing gourmet vegetarian food and a local farmers' market.

It's My Park!

It's My Park! is a half-day event on April 26th designed to boost the Partners for Parks initiative. While many service days focus on one particular park or neighborhood in need, the focus of It's My Park volunteer service day is to foster connections that park neighbors and park users have to park facilities and programs all over town. The project brings park stakeholders together and gets some work done in park facilities all over town. From 9 am until noon on Saturday, April 26th park users will meet each other, get some service work done, and perform an assessment of what that park needs. Register online at <http://www.austinparks.org> for It's My Park! community action day.

Event: "It's My Park!" Community Action Day
Date: Saturday, April 26, 2003
Booth Times: 9 am to NOON
Location: Parks all over town
 For details on Earth Day and ParksFest

Event: Earth Day Expo
Date: Sunday, April 27, 2003
Booth Times: NOON to 6:00 pm
Location: Auditorium Shores
 visit www.parksfest.org

Clean Energy Report for Central Texas

The report "Enriching Economy and Environment: Making Central Texas the Center for Clean Energy" coordinated by The Austin Clean Energy (ACE) Initiative and IC², is still available at the ACE Initiative's web site (<http://www.austincleanenergy.org/report.html>). This study highlights the opportunities associated with Central Texas's clean energy resources and the state's potential to become a center for clean energy. ACE Initiative (www.austincleanenergy.org) also offers the ACE Initiative Power-UPDATE email. To sign-up to receive this E-Newsletter, send a blank e-mail to power-update-subscribe@austincleanenergy.org. *

Local News

Please check out the SBC website (www.greenbuilder.com/sbc/events) for additional information and a full calendar of events. On the calendar, you will find descriptions for the following workshops, volunteer opportunities, and other events:

- Volunteer at Tomko Home
- Photovoltaic Design and Installation Workshop [March 24-29, 2003]
- Fundamentals in Permaculture Class [April 4-13, 2003]
- Keep Austin Beautiful's 18th Annual Town Lake Cleanup [April 5, 2003, 9:00 am – Noon]
- Women's Photovoltaic Design and Installation [June 17-21, 2003, 8:30 am – 5:30 pm daily]
- Lama Foundation's Annual Green Building Workshops [July 6-13, 2003, NW of Taos, NM]
- The Austin Biodiversity Project *

National News

ECONOMIC REWARDS OF GREEN BUILDING UNPROVEN. SAY SOME SPECIALISTS

Excerpted from Michael Brick of the New York Times, Jan. 15, 2003

Commercial developers have not adopted the principles of sustainable building because a compelling case demonstrating the economic rewards has not been made, according to specialists in real estate, finance, design and construction. "We need to make the business case," said Kenneth W. Hubbard, a partner in the Hines Company. "It has not caught on." Hines estimates that it has spent 45 cents to \$1.30 a square foot above conventional construction costs to make mechanical and electrical systems in its buildings exceed building codes. To date, Mr. Hubbard said, the financial returns are unproven. In Rockville, Maryland, the Tower Companies built a 263,000-square-foot building with many energy-efficient and green features. The company says it has secured rental contracts for \$30 to \$40 a square foot, at a time when average annual asking rents in Rockville are \$29.38. Their tenants, however, are driven by more traditional real estate concerns. "I can tell you the reason Bank of America leased here," said Bernard Sanker, an agent of the company. "Green didn't hurt, but they've got sign rights facing that Interstate." The U.S. Green Building Council's LEED certification, created as a marketing tool for developers and building owners, is less than compelling to their intended audience. "They brought me on to this thing three years ago to open the door to the corporate sector, and it's not there; it's not even close," said Edward W. Caulkins, a senior director of Cushman & Wakefield in San Francisco and a USGBC board member. "It can be very costly, and at the end of the day, you get a plaque." *

MINNESOTA'S B3 PROJECT TO BENCHMARK ENERGY USE AND MORE

Excerpted from Amy Nash of Architecture Minnesota, Jan/Feb 2003

Last year, the Minnesota State Legislature initiated the Buildings, Benchmarks and Beyond (B3) Project, which stipulates that all building projects funded by the state must exceed Minnesota energy codes by at least 30 percent and meet B3's Sustainable Building Design Guidelines. B3 differs from the Minnesota Sustainable Design Guide that was issued in 1996 and from LEED because B3 includes a system for benchmarking the success of sustainable-design strategies, as well as a client-feedback review cycle. "B3 gives us an opportunity to create a system that's accountable and thus will benefit Minnesota's environment and economy," says David Eijadi of The Weidt Group, a member of the B3 development team. "The benchmarking was conceived as a tool to measure energy consumption," says Richard Carter with LHB Engineers and Architects, also on the B3 team. "But in the future, B3 will also provide benchmarking in areas like human productivity and water conservation, which haven't really been measured before." John Carmody of the University of Minnesota's Center for Sustainable Building Research says, "The benchmarking built into B3 is about recognizing that we have to track what's going on in buildings through post-occupancy evaluations and through client and architect feedback on the design guidelines. This knowledge will also tell us what is happening in architectural firms practicing sustainable design and in the sustainable buildings they create." [More: <http://www.csbr.umn.edu:16080/B3/>] *

The Back Page: DUES!!

Please remember to pay your dues! In order to continue offering workshops, meetings, newsletters, and the other services that the coordinators of SBC provide for you, we have started collecting dues again. 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 Wednesday, March 26.

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.

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

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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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