Gathered in a dry stream bed at Waycross, SBSEers were swept away by the 2003 Retreat!

—Bruce Haglund

SBSE LAST SUMMER

WHAT HAPPENED?

When SBSEers get together, ideas and enthusiasm reign. Waycross was a petri dish for our infectious nature. On the first evening we shared green maps of our homes, our introduction to a short week of intense networking. Subsequent presentations drew inspiration from our richly diverse backgrounds, and the many lounge spaces served as informal meeting places to talk about the art of teaching and research. The bus trip to Columbus, IN, was an opportunity to share ideas in an architecture-rich environment: we reflected (or tried to) in daylit spaces designed by the immortals. And we even got some physical activity, hiking the woods at dawn and at dusk, shooting hoops in the gloaming, and walking the streets and parks of Columbus. It was a transcendent experience! Kudos to the organizers Leonard Bachman, who provided an interesting and flexible program, and Bob Koester and Jeff Culp who found Waycross and handled logistics flawlessly! We also weathered a short mid-morning blackout on our final day, a prelude to the big Great Lakes outage that paralyzed cities from Cleveland to New York later in the day!

NEW FACES AT THE RETREAT

Take a closer look at the group photo above. There are a lot of new faces, a healthy omen for SBSE. Our shared passion for integrating environmental technology and design is being grasped by the next generation of teachers. This passing the baton is largely due to the efforts of Alison Kwok’s Agents of Change project coupled with SBSE’s provision of retreat scholarships to teaching assistants. Twelve of the folks pictured above attended with scholarship support from either AoC or SBSE. Moreover, several first-time faculty members attended. Nonetheless two faces from the inaugural 1986 retreat persisted (Dent and Haglund) [looking much older, however—ed.]. Is there an appropriate ecological analogy about community health?

—Bruce Haglund

NEXT SUMMER: HTTP://WWW.SBSE.ORG/RETREAT2004/

SBSE CALENDAR

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<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month/Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Nov 9-15</td>
<td>PLEA Conf.; Santiago de Chile</td>
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<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Jan 8-11</td>
<td>AoC Workshop; Phoenix, AZ</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mar 16-18</td>
<td>ACSA Techno. Conf.; Miami, FL</td>
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<td>Apr 28-May 1</td>
<td>TIA/SBSE POE Conf.; Windsor, UK</td>
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<td>Jun 2-4</td>
<td>ARCC/EAAE Conf.; Dublin, IE</td>
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<td>Jun 26-30</td>
<td>ASHRAE Conf.; Nashville, TN</td>
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<td>Jul 7-11</td>
<td>SBSE Retreat; Cascade Head, OR</td>
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<td>Jul 11-14</td>
<td>ASES Solar 2004; Portland, OR</td>
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<td>Aug TBA</td>
<td>AoC Workshop; Santa Barbara, CA</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Jun 25-29</td>
<td>ASHRAE Conf.; Denver, CO</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Aug 8-12</td>
<td>Solar World Congress; Orlando, FL</td>
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BALLOT ENCLOSED

It’s time to vote! We have five fine candidates for two elected positions, president-elect and secretary/treasurer. Their campaign statements and the official ballot are an insert. You can only vote if you’re a current member. Return ballots and membership forms (with checks or PayPal confirmation) by Halloween to Sandy Stannard, our current treasurer. Polls close at the witching hour, All Souls’ Eve!

—Bruce Haglund
DOES ARCHITECTURE HAVE DISCIPLINE?

This summer’s SBSE list server discussion on the World Trade Center site redesign was intriguing and symptomatic of problems at many levels. At one level, one wonders what else the design team will “spin.” Will we see headlines such as: Libeskind Rebuts Concerns Regarding Building Code Compliance? Yesterday on NPR, Libeskind argued that the firm’s claim that their New York design “meets the building codes” should not be taken literally (only an engineer would do that), but rather metaphorically. Libeskind’s meeting building codes is of akin to the meeting of the waters (as with the Missouri and Mississippi) or of meeting his or her match (not that anyone would do so in his sun-dappled buildings). Nothing else was ever implied by his statement.

Several forces allow this sort of real (site shading) and imagined (codes) dissembling to occur. First, it works in most architecture school studios and juries, so why not in practice? Architecture school is a great place to hone the skills of spin. Proof of claims is rarely required, and if cornered on an issue, one can almost always move effortlessly into Let’s Make a Deal. “The structure may look suspicious to you, but take a look at my titanium-encased entry sequence.” Second, the “philistine defense” allows art to trump science and common sense in most architectural debates. If any attempt is made to hold a designer accountable for the quantitative, the philistine defense can quickly and effectively be brought to bear. “You just don’t understand the design. There’s no point in continuing this discussion.” Thirdly, the general public seems to have given up on expectations that anything other than style will be delivered by a design firm. My guess is that the debate over Libeskind’s shadows was a yawner on the streets. Much like the debate over Iraqi uranium. Who really expects actual facts from a famous architect or infamous president?

At another level, and even more disturbing than individual instances of self-promotional hyperbole running amok, is what appears to be the trend of replacing architectural reporting and beat-the-streets inquiry with self-promotion and anecdote. This trend surely started many years ago, was exacerbated by the demise of Progressive Architecture, and continued willy-nilly with the publication of Building Community (the community in question apparently being Anecdote City). This trend was recently reinforced by an article in Architecture (April 2003, pg. 49) entitled, “Little Green Schoolhouse: Sustainability Gaining a Foothold in Architecture Education.” The article (as excerpted in Greenclips 214) stated: “The sustainability movement is changing the way a number of schools approach architectural education. Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, approaches sustainable design as a cross-departmental area of inquiry... At Florida A&M University in Tallahassee, Florida, architecture professors are teaching a critical regionalism informed by environmentalism.”

The information about Florida A&M University {where Walter teaches—ed.} seems out of place and out of context. What exactly is “critical regionalism” (or “environmentalism” for that matter)? More critically, what connection exists between sustainability—the clearly stated focus of the article—and critical regionalism? Are they believed to be identical concepts, synonyms, cause and effect, prerequisites? Can a school that teaches architecture metaphorically claim it is addressing sustainability? Isn’t proof required? Is a definition of “sustainability” required? In a pinch, can the philistine defense be brought to bear on those doubting Thomases?

I believe that sustainability is too important a concept and goal to be anything that anybody wants it to be. Articles such as “Little Green Schoolhouse” do not help us understand that concept or reach that goal. Again, they are just part of a larger trend in which anecdote becomes broad reality. I do not believe that anyone has a true handle on where, when, why, how, and by whom sustainability is really taught in our schools of architecture. Ditto green design. Ditto environmental control systems (shame on us for this oversight). Is such failure to know emblematic of a profession or of a discipline?

At the 2000 Paris research conference co-sponsored by the European Association for Architectural Education and the Architectural Research Centers Consortium a question was raised as to whether architecture was a discipline. At issue were the trappings of a discipline: an evolving knowledge base, a culture of critical inquiry, peer review, a regard for facts versus anecdotes. Considering the examples raised herein, a more germane question might well be: “Does architecture have any discipline?” Or does simply saying it in architecture make it so?—Walter Gwоздsk
Each SBSE member may request one complimentary copy of Edward Dean’s *Energy Management Strategies in Public Libraries* from the Libris Design Project Manager, Linda Demmers at <xlibris@earthlink.net>. Additional copies are available for $40, including postage and handling. Information is available on the library facility planning web site, <http://www.librisedesign.org> that also contains source information on sustainability, daylighting, and other library facility planning topics. *(I already got my copy, and it’s wonderful.–ed.)*

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**WAYCROSS RETREAT RETROSPECTIVE**

Thanks for the great retreat! I have finally finished cataloguing my digital images (slides haven’t even gone in for processing yet). Here’s the link <http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/architecture/faculty_projects/terri/gallery.html>. Just scroll down past all the “Canadian stuff” to Indiana. Also some shots of O’Hare and the colourful United Airlines tunnel just below that—taken while killing time waiting for a flight home post-blackout!

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**SUNPATH SOFTWARE**

To get a copy of the Sunpath software, which superimposes sun paths onto fisheye digital images, send a message to Ryan Stroupe at <r2s2@pge.com>. In your message, please include your name, e-mail address, telephone number, university/company, and department. He’ll reply with the URL, user name, and password. Since we need to keep track of who has requested it, if you want to let colleagues and students know about it, please have them contact Ryan instead of providing them the username and password. The software is ready for use, but we recognize that there are other functions that would be great to include. Your comments are welcome.

As a teaching tool, it supports an exercise that has students manually generating a horizon/site obstruction mask onto an equidistant projection. In lecture, I demonstrated the software after the students had gone through the manual method. I certainly got a few moans and groans from students for having made them do something they could have done in about a minute, but it was all in good spirits for they appreciated the software tool and, most important, they understood what they and the software had generated.

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**2004 ACSA TECHNOLOGY CONFERENCE**

I’ve just agreed to chair a session at the ACSA Technology Conference next March on “Green Architecture.” Very sketchy as of now, but the conference will be in Miami Beach, March 16–18, preceding the annual conference, March 18–20. Seemed like the appropriate foot to stick in the door. The conference is being organized by Abbas Aminmansour (Illinois) and Phil Gallagos (Colorado–Denver). A second session on “sustainable architecture” is up for grabs. I offered to give ACSA a list of people who might be interested—any interest in an SBSE monopoly on the theme? I also suggested that we might be interested in co-sponsoring a speaker, although supposedly they already have chosen Bill Carpenter, Jim McDonald (expert on wind?), and Ray Clark (expert on system integration in tall buildings?). Any thoughts on how we would like to proceed? Counter proposals?

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**LETTERS [CONTINUED]**

Thanks for the web address for the MSN slide show of notorious green buildings. My reaction: The collection is inspired more by the technological than by the ecological imagination and the lessons of nature. However one might admire the accomplishment of the architects and the daring of their proposals, qualities of timeless and effortless elegance seem absent from the collection. Most are in urban contexts, thus unable to benefit fully from the natural microclimates of landscape that has been removed. None takes on the challenge to restore and enhance the beneficial role of the natural landscape disrupted by the act of building. That is, is it not, the true responsibility of ecological design? Or a simple criterion for green design: would a bluebird nest here?

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[And folks say the English are reticent and tactful.–ed.]

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It looks like Drew Gillett, PE, and I will have a story in the Nov/Dec 2003 issue of Solar Today about Soldier’s Grove, WI (pop. 622) and how their 20-odd commercial solar-heated buildings have been working since 1978 when they got tired of periodic floods and moved the commercial center uphill and passed 3 laws: thou shalt not shade any part of thy neighbor’s property from 9–3 on the winter solstice, thou shalt limit thy building’s heat loss to half the state requirement, and thy building shall be at least 50% solar-heated.

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One of the many informal meetings of minds at Waycross.
SBSE PEOPLE

- On leave from WSU studying sustainable architecture and urbanism, Tom Bartuska is updating/editing *The Built Environment* with Wendy McClure (Idaho).
- Dana Buntrock was tenured and promoted to associate professor at California. She has also received a Robert R. Taylor Grant for faculty development to support her class, “Japanese Craft and Construction.”
- Steve Dent has been awarded the University of New Mexico Regents’ Lectureship for 2002–04. The funding supports his continuing research in environmental technologies in sustainable design.
- Bruce Haglund, just back from sabbatical in London, was sentenced to a year as interim chair at Idaho.
- Dean Heerwagen’s tome *Passive and Active Environmental Controls* has been published by McGraw–Hill. [After a gestation period that a whale would envy!–ed.]

### SBSE SCHOLARS AT ARUP

A special thanks to Bruce Haglund from Arup for his time, patience, and fantastic contributions during his all too brief stay with us. As reported in the *SBSE News*, he focused on extending Vital Signs work into a corporate environment. His sabbatical with us established a precedent for those who might be interested in spending part or all of a sabbatical leave with Arup. I am very open to ideas from the SBSE community and again extend the invitation. One important lesson from our inaugural effort was that we need to start early to turn the large corporate wheels. So, let me hear from you! <chris.luebkeman@arup.com>

- [Don’t ignore Mike Donn’s fine work with the e-version!–ed.]

### ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

**JUNE 24, 2003, SOLAR 2003, AUSTIN, TEXAS**


1. **Scholarships**: Jim Wasley announced student scholarships to: a) attend the SBSE retreat; b) attend and present at ASES Solar Conference. Agents of Change project support has been provided for the same. John Wiley & Sons (Amanda Miller) were acknowledged for their book donations to recipients of ASES best paper and best presentation awards.

2. **Nominations**: Alison Kwok announced the slate of nominees for President-elect (Emad Affifi, SCAD; Alfredo Fernandez-Gonzalez, BSU; Christopher Theis, LSU) and Treasurer/Secretary (Sandra Mallory, Environmental Works; Steve Dent, UNM)

3. **Treasurer’s Report**: distributed.

4. **Memberships**: The membership year 2003–2004 begins June 21. We are experimenting for a year with PayPal to encourage those of you who would like to pay for your membership by credit card.

5. **Resources**:
   a) Jeff Cook Legacy Project (Bryan): Substantial fund, collection of books, and slides left to ASU (disposition to be determined by trustees). There is a possibility to create CDs of the slides by ASU, and SBSE might distribute at low cost. Also possibility of distributing Jeff’s personal library. Kwok to follow up with letter from SBSE.
   b) Fuller Moore slide collection (Kwok): Approximately 7,000 slides (Aalto, structures) to be made available to SBSE in the fall.
   c) Sun Angle Calculators (Kwok): 1,000 produced 2 years ago and re-order made. Available for $15 from SBSE. Income approximately $4,000 over two years.
   d) Image Gallery CDs for teaching (Kwok): Approximately 15 CDs in collection coordinated by Bob Koester at BSU. Brings in approximately $500/year.
   e) Curriculum materials (Bachman): still has archived files that used to be brought from retreat to retreat, which must be about 10 years old and should be updated.

6. **Peer Review Network** (Grondzik): Valuable resource for faculty promotion and tenure decisions. Process outlined and faculty are encouraged to contact Walter to establish the network of faculty who will write letters.

7. **Newsletter** (Kwok for Haglund): Thanks to Diane Armpriest for all her efforts (printing, mailing) while ed. was in London. Also noted were the embedded links in the PDF electronic versions. [Don’t ignore Mike Donn’s fine work with the e-version!–ed.]

8. **International Scholarships** (Grondzik for Lechner): introduced two motions that have been proposed by Norbert Lechner.
   a) Motion: Because of the high cost of membership ($25) in developing countries, it is suggested that SBSE institute free membership. Discussion involved definition of “developing countries” and it is suggested we use the ISES definition. Motion amended by J. Reynolds: electronic newsletter only. Motion amended by H. Hay: non-voting status. Passed unanimously: Affiliate membership will be free for members (faculty, design professionals, students) from developing countries, electronic newsletter notification, and non-voting status.
   b) Motion: One faculty member from a developing country will be granted a scholarship to the SBSE retreat. Discussion involved cost to SBSE of approximately $350/year; use the ISES definition of “developing countries.” Motion amended by H. Hay to request money from the Jeff Cook trustees for the estate and to hereafter call it the Jeff Cook Retreat Scholarship. Passed unanimously.

*continued next page*
9. **Web Site** (Kwok for Marcial): Robert requests feedback on items for the web site. Ovation from attendees complimenting his efforts on an attractive and cohesive web site.

10. **Retreat Update:**
   a) 2003 Morgantown, IN (Bachman): “Architecture as Pedagogy” takes place August 11–15. Presentations on Aug. 12 & 14. Trip to Columbus on Aug. 13. No parallel sessions, yet there will be breakout sessions in groups of 6+ to develop concept maps. Scheduled to allow for lots of networking.
   b) 2004 Oregon Coast: will take place July 7–10 (prior to ASES July 11–15) at the Sitka Art and Ecology Center. Theme will be “Architectural Research.” Content to be coordinated by Alison Kwok; venue and logistics by G.Z. Brown. Reminder by John Reynolds that workshops for ASES are on July 10, 11, and 15.
   c) 2005 Florida: to coordinate with ASES/ISES in Orlando. Fuller Moore volunteered to assist with some of the ground control; content and logistics coordinators to be selected.

11. **Long Term Planning** (Wasley):
   a) SBSE to establish a working relationship with USGBC to keep SBSE at the forefront in green design.
   b) Increase resources with course outlines, syllabi, etc.
   c) Suggests appropriation for supporting expenses for SBSE activities ($350 for Retreat Scholarship-developing country; $250 for Tool Days; $350 for Retreat Scholarship for an invited non-SBSEer. Membership approved $1,000 of funds for these purposes, in addition to student retreat scholarship support.

12. **SBSE Partnerships & Co-Sponsorships** (Grondzik):
   a) Post-Occupancy Evaluation Conference April 2004 on the grounds of Windsor Castle, abstracts due in September. Coordinated by one of our members, Sue Roaf of Oxford Brookes University. Several SBSE members are on the technical committee.
   b) Tool Days: SBSE has been a co-sponsor for Tool Days at the NBM in WDC 2001, Patagonia in Reno 2002, and Solar Decathlon in Austin 2003. Two Tool Days were held in the UK, coordinated by Bruce Haglund at Arup’s Bristol and Manchester offices.

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**THIRD WORLD MEMBERSHIPS**

Recognizing that sustainability is a worldwide problem that will be solved by the people of the world working together, SBSE encourages the sharing of ideas with the developing world through two new programs: (1) free memberships, and (2) scholarship for attending retreats.

1. There is now an option for free membership for faculty from developing countries. If a faculty member from such a country cannot afford to pay the membership, each year he or she can apply for a payment waiver. See the SBSE web site under “membership.”

2. In honor of the late Jeffrey Cook, an annual scholarship for attending the SBSE retreat will be offered to a faculty member from a developing country. The award will be based primarily on the benefits of the scholarship to the applicant’s institution and country. The scholarship will cover only the registration fee which includes room and board expenses. To apply for the scholarship, an applicant must submit a one-page letter describing the potential benefits to her or his institution and country that would accrue from attending the retreat. The scholarship does not cover the travel expenses to and from the retreat. Each applicant must also submit an abstract for a presentation to be made at the retreat.

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**EVENT HORIZON**

**SYMPOSIUM: BRIDGES IN LIGHT**

The inaugural Lighting Research Center symposium connecting traditional and nontraditional markets and technologies will be held **October 22–23, 2003**, in Saratoga Springs, NY. Topics include Light and Health, Energy, Solid-State Lighting, Sustainable Design, Transportation, and Roadway Systems. Will provocative concepts, new technologies, and unexpected markets merge to begin building lighting networks? See the light through new eyes. For more info contact Patricia Rizzo, 518.687.7194, <rizzop@rpi.edu>.

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**PLEA 2003 CHILE**

“Rethinking Development: Are we producing a people-oriented habitat?” will be held in Santiago de Chile at 33°30’S on **November 9–12, 2003**. Though the official language is English, Spanish translation will be provided. Tours and invited presentations in other cities will make for a memorable week in November. For more info on PLEA topics e-mail <plea2003@puc.cl> or visit <http://www.plea2003.cl>.

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**CLOSING THE LOOP**

“Post Occupancy Evaluation: The Next Steps” will be held **28 April–1 May 2004**, at Cumberland Lodge, Windsor, UK. See the conference brochure at <http://www.sbse.org/calendar/WindsorBrochure1041.pdf>. Accommodation at the lodge is strictly limited to 80, so register as soon as possible, preferably by 28 October 2003. Call for papers—submit an abstract of no more than 300 words no later than **30 September 2003** to Sue Roaf <sue@brookes.ac.uk>.

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**INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH CONFERENCE**


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-Norbert & Shatner
KAHN AND ANDO IN FT. WORTH

I went to see the new Tadao Ando buildings in Fort Worth and in St. Louis. The Pulitzer’s concrete in St. Louis is unfortunate—you see evidence of the steel chairs used to hold up the rebar all over the ceiling of the building! I know this flaw is part of Kahn’s Kimbell and at my own beloved Wurster Hall, but times have changed, and there are now little plastic chairs with rounded feet that can be used.

The Modern Art Museum of Fort Worth is quite a lot of building envelope: five large, bar-like pavilion structures linked by a lower perpendicular bar that runs through them. It seems a structure conceived to maximize the envelope, and at 100ºF in late July, would not be my ideal. I assume this design was an homage to Kahn’s Kimbell, but the earlier building is compact as the bars run against each other, not separated. The skin of Ando’s building is mostly insulated glazing, with aluminum panels on the south wall (and a slight overhang that did shade the south wall in late July) and some west walls. The galleries also face a reflecting pool to the east, and I wonder if it only adds to the problems of protecting the art from heat and light. As a result, all the glass boxes are wrapped around interior concrete boxes with varying degrees of openness. (The concrete at Fort Worth is generally fine, though I prefer the earlier “pillowed” concrete in Ando’s work.)

Aside from the heat gain on these walls and the question of light, two other architectural issues stood out. First, in both buildings, Ando used a slightly tinted glazing. I assume he thought the tint an energy saver, but Ando forgot to specify the same tint on the glazing for the (clear-glazed) doors. The result was a rupture in what was intended to be a clean surface, especially notable from the interior.

The other, as my former home-ec teacher mom would tell you, was the amount of glass to be cleaned, and the way it was being done. There is a poor soul whose job is to clean all that glass. Ando did not accommodate glass cleaning, so this guy was climbing up and down an impossibly tall, rather wobbly looking ladder to clean, all the while scattering drops on the glass below where they were most likely to be seen. At the lower levels, the curtain wall was attracting bugs—something I have seen in Ito’s Suwa Museum as well—due to the similarity (as far as water bugs are concerned) of the glittery surface of glass and aluminum to the glistening of water. I was at MAM two days, and based on the window washer’s progress, it’s a full-time job. Another worker was watering trees one at a time all day. No irrigation! The trees, of course, were dying.)

Speaking of trees, the Kimbell has a lovely grove on the west near the glazed entry, and thus the glass is shaded at the end of the day. Ando, as you all probably know, does not take the same opportunities to use landscape to support comfort. The juxtaposition of the two buildings, especially in hot July, really made this difference apparent.

This tandem would make a great tour for students. The two buildings raise a variety of issues:

- What is the nature of a museum? Is it a work of art or a representation of larger institutional forces? The Ando building in Fort Worth is a classic corporate museum, and the clients actually did a great job of avoiding Ando’s worst tendencies. Moving through the museum is clear and well-organized; the art has generous, well-lighted spaces; and there is nothing intrusive (unlike an air vent that runs the full length of the long gallery in the Pulitzer and detracts from the sculpture beneath it!). Unfortunately, they also eliminated the best of what Ando can do, so only in the café pavilion and the main stair does one begin to feel what Ando does best.

- Performance and maintenance issues, noted above.

- Natural light. Kahn’s Kimbell is well-known for its subtle lighting. Ando’s museum seems more a struggle between wanting light and not wanting light, e.g., large expanses of tinted glass with concrete behind.

- The advances in concrete over 40 years are also apparent.

I did not see the back of the house. My guess is that Ando would trump Kahn. Could be an interesting study.

—Dana Buntrock
Driving from I–90 into Oberlin, OH, I was struck by the contradiction that exists between the lushness and the spareness of the public green. The color and character of each tree is made more vivid by its isolation within a flat, expansive field. It’s a peaceful spot, and evokes simpler times (or maybe it’s just the Midwest!). An evening walk is part of that picture, and we all seemed to oblige ourselves. The Agents of Change workshop started in a perfectly congenial way with a series of informal meetings on the street, in the halls, and at the local pub.

Early the next morning, our weekend quickly became intense. We got right down to business by organizing into our 5 teams of 6. Our host, Katy Janda from Oberlin College’s Environmental Studies Program, graciously introduced the workshop goals, organization, and trainers (faculty: Walter Grondzik, Bruce Haglund, Alison Kwok, Adil Sharag–Eldin, and Jim Wasley; graduate teaching fellows: Chad Bard, Kathy Bash, Peter Marks, Roger Ota, and Keith Simon). Our teams reviewed the various measuring tools that comprise the AoC toolkit. As we learned their functions, we learned the importance of using the tools in a meaningful way. 

Next, we heard about the building, the A. J. Lewis Center, that we were to study. David Orr, the director of the Environmental Studies Program, outlined the goals, design process, and ongoing work. The first myth about buildings was quickly dispelled. Buildings are assumed complete at opening day, but this building continues to evolve. John Petersen, Environmental Studies Program, described one of the main features of this evolution; the building, as a premier example of sustainable design and a teaching institute, is constantly monitored. Through that and other actions, he explained, the building begins to work like an organism that uses stimulus and response controls to regulate itself. 

Like other buildings on campus the Lewis Center is well- proportioned and proper. But it is different on several other accounts. It uses 30% of the energy of other buildings on campus, deals with its own waste through its living machine in its greenhouse, captures sunlight to produce energy, and catches the roof runoff. The classrooms are pleasant because they are well lighted by both daylight and low-energy fixtures, and the passively heated and cooled public spaces are generously proportioned. The building is engaged in critical ways with its surroundings and the environment. It is landscaped to be, at moments, part of its surrounding berms and trees, and it is organized to take advantage of views of “natural” elements, like the artificial wetlands fed by stormwater runoff from the roof and cunningly juxtaposed with the living machine.

After our extensive tour, we were introduced to our challenge—to test the building’s performance. But first, we were asked to develop a clear, concise, and testable hypothesis about its thermal and atmospheric conditions, define a method to test this hypothesis, and begin to set up measuring equipment.

In less than 24 hours, all 5 teams put together professional reports that identified hypotheses, developed a method of studying the claim, collected data, analyzed the data, and made conclusions along with a few qualifications. The projects ranged from a study of the effectiveness of solar shading on the east wall of the atrium to light levels in the classroom, to the question of comfort given the variability of temperature and humidity throughout the building. These presentations, beautifully packaged, are posted on the Agents of Change web site <http://aoc.uoregon.edu/documents/0803teams.shtm>.

One of the most important discussions was the final one. The participants were asked how they plan to integrate the Agents of Change experience into their curriculum. And while the weekend learning seemed to end abruptly for some of us, I caught two of the faculty trainers doing a bit of their own research on the light transmittance of the different types of glass after everyone else had left! The discussion and exchange about course programs and teaching concerns was initiated and will continue to be another extremely important aspect of the whole experience.

We were fortunate because our study building is one of the first of its kind in the United States. While it works on many levels, it became clear through our studies that several small conflicts have arisen from its many good intentions. In fact, the AoC team was able to help Katy correct one such problem! Katy’s office is on the north side of the building.

When she wanted to override the air-conditioning system to get some direct fresh air, she had to perform a yoga-like procedure, lying over her desk, and making her elbows move backwards to reach a well-hidden pull. While the operable units look great on the outside, they are hard to reach through a desk. But one of the AoC members noticed that a panel on her desk could be removed allowing her direct access, albeit under the desk! So, with screwdriver in hand she happily helped the building evolve! As the occupants fine-tune the building, and it reacts to more variables, they will create a project that like the Oberlin’s public green, sustains its own contradictions and performs both symbolically and literally to do no harm.

—Laura Briggs
RETREAT RETURNS TO OREGON COAST

Next summer’s SBSE Retreat will be at Cascade Head, OR, July 7–10, 2004, at the Sitka Center for Art and Ecology. Come celebrate and retreat with colleagues in an action-packed, fun-filled three days, with a focus on architectural research. Theme sessions will include research methods courses, teaching research skills through case studies, funding sources, and catching up on the activities of twenty years of research by SBSEers.

Space is limited, so mark your calendars. Registration and a call for proposals will be available in January. Be sure to check the retreat web site: <http://www.sbse.org/retreat/retreat2004> for updated information. Brought to you by: Charlie Brown (Logistics) and Alison Kwok (Content).

—Alison Kwok

The wet, wonderful weather of the Oregon Coast awaits next year’s retreaters.

WINTER ISSUE SUBMITTAL DEADLINE—DECEMBER 1

FIRST CLASS MAIL