president's column

michael courtney hoffman, aia 2006 president aiaVT





The aiaVT newsletter is published by AIA Vermont, the Vermont Chapter of the American Institute of Architects.

Executive Director: Hanne Williams, Hon. AIAVT aiavt@madriver.com

> 1662 Mill Brook Road Fayston, Vermont 05673 p 802.496.3761 f 802.496.3294

AIA Grassroots 2006 - Notes from the Hill

The Grassroots Leadership and Legislative Conference held annually in February in Washington, DC is designed to strengthen AIA Leadership at all levels and to show support for a non-partisan Legislative Agenda (noted below). For me, the most interesting portion of the time is when we head up to Capitol Hill to meet with our elected representatives. Hanne continues to maintain we have the easiest job of any AIA Board in the nation. While some states bring large delegations to cover their multitude of Congressional Representatives, we Vermonters have a simple and direct path - three meetings, three good converstations. While we were there to talk about national legislation, we were really talking about the health of our communities, how our profession supports those communities and what the elected folks can do to help the process along.

In the House we met with Warren Gunnels, Bernie's Legislative Director as all of the House was out on a retreat that week (no political comment needed). Over on the Senate side of the Hill, Pat Leahy was tied up with the Supreme Court nominee hearings and did not make it back to his office in time for the meeting. We met with his Legislative Staff. We did get a chance to meet with Jim Jeffords for the final time as he is retiring after this term. He has been a big supporter of the profession, we thanked him for all his efforts on our behalf.

cont.

Solvang:

A Historical Anthropological Illumination of an Ethnicized Space

Anders Linde-Laursen

http://www.cloud-cuckoo.net

Please imagine a hilltop situated in a quiet green valley - an idyllic place surrounded by scattered oaks and farmhouses, vineyards, orchards, and grazing cattle. Then bestow on this place an ideal climate: it is rarely very hot or very cold. While it seldom rains, the winds from the nearby ocean bring enough moisture to keep things green throughout most of summer. This enchanted place must indeed be an ideal spot for people to relax and to recover from the stress and inconveniences of Modern City life.

It is possible to suppose that I am speaking¹ of a remote place, hard to access. A place spared from the effects of cultural processes associated with Modernity such as urbanization, capitalization, emigration, secularization... You might even think that I am talking of a pastoral community, a "Gemeinschaft" enduring on the outskirts of the world

10 percent

Energy prices are affecting the costs of many aspects of your household or business, including the same sectors that produce greenhouse gas emissions: solid waste, transportation, and energy efficiency. Check out the 10% Challenge online emissions calculator to find out where you could cut costs and do your part to stop climate change. Want more ideas? Call us at (802)865-7375 or visit

http://www.10percentchallenge.org.

5 CEU's will be given to attendees of this program. AIA Vermont is not handling reservations (reservation form is attached) so AIA Members must sign the Education Forms which will be available at the registration desk to have their learning units recorded (non-members can request a certificate of attendance).

LEED EB workshop at the basin harbor club

Please Join Vermont Chapter of CSI and the Vermont Green Building Network for a full-day LEED EB (Existing Buildings) workshop, followed by a day of classes on the greening of existing buildings and a green building products trade fair on May 18th & 19th, 2006, Basin Harbor Club, Vergennes, Vermont. Attendee registration and detailed program information will available in March.

aiaVT welcomes

stephen fenn, aia of pittsfield kirk moore, aia of rutland robert swinburne, aia of brattleboro These are the main bills and/or issues under consideration:

(Note H.R. are Bills in the House of Representatives / S. are bills in the Senate)

- H.R. 3159: Affordable Housing/Community Revitalization/Historic Preservation H.R. 3159 is legislation sponsored by Rep. Phil English (R-PA) to update the current historic rehabilitation tax credits in ways that will increase the credit for "difficult to develop areas" by allowing the 10% tax credit to be used for residential rental property and easing the requirements for use of the credits by tax- exempt originations. Senators Gordon Smith (R-OR) and Blanch Lincoln(D-AR) are working on a draft of a Senate version of the Bill.
- H.R. 4100/ S. 2172: Hurricane Rebuilding: The Louisiana Recovery Corporation H.R. 4100 is legislation proposed by Louisiana Congressman Richard Baker (R-LA) to establish the Louisiana Recovery Corporation. S. 2172 is the Senate companion bill introduced by Senator Mary Landrieu (D-LA). The AIA also supports providing similar redevelopment assistance to the storm-ravaged Mississippi Gulf Coast.
- H.R. 4480: Brownfields Redevelopment: H.R. 4480 is legislation proposed by Rep. Mike Turner (R-OH) to renew brownfield sites to produce economic development, enhance community life, and promote sustainable development.

<u>Sustainable Design</u>, <u>Energy</u>, <u>and the Built Environment</u>: The AIA seeks legislation to increase the number of "green" buildings constructed according to high-performance and sustainable design standards in both the public and private sectors as a way to make a major, measurable contribution to reducing U.S. energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

cont.

Nothing, however, could be more wrong than this visualization. The hilltop I am talking about is a mesa situated between San Francisco and Los Angeles, close to highway 101. The village located on top this hill is visited each year by 1.5 million tourists who come to spend a day or more. Hence, this hilltop is not a remote Gemeinschaft, rather a local place in the very swirl of Gesellschaft.²

Solvang, the incorporated township on top of the hill is a village or small town of around 5200 people lying some forty miles north of Santa Barbara and three miles from Buellton, a township on highway 101. An alternative name often employed for Solvang is "The Danish Capital of America". For a couple of years, I have been interested in this town and its history and I have stayed there during most of 1998 to conduct anthropological and historical research. In this paper, I am trying to sketch some questions on landscape and architecture that seem to me to be crucial for an understanding of the place.



architecture &

The "Architecture & ..." lecture series, jointly sponsored by the Bread Loaf Corporation of Middlebury and Middlebury College will present a lecture entitled "Anthills to Labyrinths — Engineering Sustainable Architecture" by Patrick Bellew. Mr. Bellew is principal and founder of atelier ten (www.atelierten.com) of London and New York, a building services engineering firm with worldwide projects dedicated to integrating innovative sustainable technologies with noteworthy architecture. He also teaches environmental design at the Yale University School of Architecture. The lecture will be at 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 6, in Dana Auditorium on the Middlebury College campus and is free and open to the public.





21st Century Schools/Modernization and Healthy Design: The AIA supports a Federally funded study to quantify the effects of well-designed, healthy, safe, and sustainable educational facilities on learning, the well-being of children, and academic achievement.

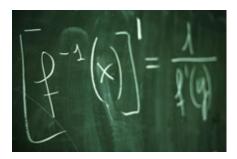
I'm under no illusion that what we said in our short time on the hill will make a huge difference in passage of these bills. The time spent is to simply remind Jim, Pat, Bernie and their staffs, that we care about the fabric of our towns and cities; we care about the character of the landscape; we care about our communities and we want them to remember it. The meetings are really about keeping a link, a relationship with the Offices of our Representatives. This personalization is important. We are not just a profession - we are active & dedicated members of communities - people who willingly have taken on the large responsibility of shaping our communities and need support to do it.

Still, as a profession we have not done a particularly good job in advocating in the legislative arena. We know we need to have a stronger voice in Washington (or Montpelier); we need to make a more concerted effort to contact representatives and voice support for those elements of the legislative program that we wish to see moved forward. Letters and phone calls from you to your representatives carry weight. Please contact me if you have questions regarding these legislative items.

Till next month!

In the following, I will give an outline of the history of Solvang and its architecture. The town's appearance is important, because both locals and visitors often mention it as the most important reason to visiting the town. After that, I will discuss the possibility for different groups to obtain identity in this landscape of artificial half-timbering, fake thatched roofs, and windmills.

Danes founded Solvang in 1911 on an earlier Spanish land-claim. The founding fathers of the town were first generation Danish immigrant farmers from mid-western states who moved on to milder climate. They intended to create in Solvang a community in which they could preserve their Danish culture and language as well as pass it on to coming generations. Hence, they established their everyday life around institutions, which they understood as being affiliated with something Danish: a Lutheran congregation, a village hall, and a folk-high-school. Solvang, although appearing externally as any other contemporary small community in that part of the US, was thus Danish because of the town-dwellers convictions and daily practices.



call for nominations

Sellers and Company of Warren is seeking nominations for great public rooms in Vermont. This is for a book: Great Rooms of Vermont. Hopefully this will begin a series of Vermont Architecture books. The point is to recognize and flaunt the best of the public rooms and spaces that exist in our State. The ideal make up of the book is to have each room on two facing pages. One page will be a photo of the room, the other will be detail photos and text. The text supplied by the submitter. Hopefully dozens of architects, historians, artists and others will show their favorite rooms, public spaces and be a part of the book. Written by the constellation of Vermont enthusiasts. Send a one liner to Dave@sellersandcompany.com. For example: room. Vermont Senate Chamber, Ammi Young architect, submitted by xxxxxx.

We will contact you and arrange for photos if you don't have any. Snapshots will be helpful in determining the final selection.....



solutions for school facilities today and tomorrow

(Presented by the Vermont High Performance Schools Initiative)

Are you a school architect who values healthy and wholesome environments for your community's children to thrive and learn? Are you kept from realizing these values by local resistance to high performance building techniques? Schools across the U.S. are implementing cost-effective solutions to these problems. On Thursday, March 30, join school officials, national experts and technical advisors to learn how to you can help your school clients achieve school buildings that promote health, efficiency, and sustainability.

At this summit, school officials will be:

- Inspired by expert speakers with real-world experience;
- Enticed by local and national examples;
- Advised on sustainable renovations/new construction;
- Introduced to ways of maximizing the health and efficiency of your operations; and
- Invited to join a supportive network of Vermont sustainable schools where they can find inspiration and answers through shared experiences.

cont.

In 1936, Solvang celebrated its 25th anniversary with a festival: Danish Day. At the same time as the people of Solvang celebrated themselves as a Danish community and displayed their Danishness to out-of-towners, indications of serious ruptures started to emerge in the Danish practices of the community. Many of the Danish institutions were eventually abandoned and Danish language disappeared from the public scene from the 1930s through the 1960s. Along with the institutions and Danish language went what could have regenerated and secured the Danish practices of generations to come. Thus, the pioneers wish to establish a specific kind of Danish everyday life did not progress further than their own generation.

At the same time as the Danish practices of Solvang started to disintegrate, contrary processes began to gain power. The community started more intensively to mark its Danish roots.

Bylin's Roof Ice Melt System

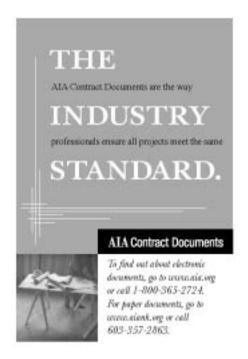
- * prevents ice dams
- * prevents icicles
- * no more roof leaks
- * reduce design liability
- * permanent solution

(888) 313-5666 I www.bylinusa.com I info@bylinusa.com

BYLIN

ENGINEERED

SYSTEMS



The program includes:

• Keynote Address from Ron Bratlie
Director of Special Projects with thirty eight years of experience who has
overseen \$250 million in High Performance construction and is currently
overseeing the building of his fourth High Performance School

Keynote Address from Arif Quirashi
 Indoor air quality, health and safety, life cycle cost expert.

Case studies

 Breakout sessions/workshops
 Capital Planning & Financing; Indoor Environmental Quality; Energy Efficiency; Siting, Materials & Transportation.

March 30, 8:30-4:30
Vermont College (also known as the Union Institute and University)
36 College St.
Montpelier, VT 05602
Lunch will be provided

For more information (802)865-7375 ewang@10ercentchallenge.org www.vthps.org

It proceeded with celebrating the town's Danish affiliation through yearly Danish Days and after the Second World War a special style in architecture, called "Danish provincial", began and developed rapidly.

At the same time the first copy of a series of windmills was erected. – Today the imitated half-timbering of "Danish Provincial" and the copies of windmills create a significant landscape, which in itself is regarded as the most conspicuous symbol of the town's Danishness: "Solvang's architecture is unquestionably its most distinguishing feature. Even visitors from Denmark frequently attest to its authenticity", as it was recently expressed by the leader of the local Visitors Bureau.³

Local writings and a strong local narrative of the town's history⁴ most often claim that an article in the January 1947 issue of the Saturday Evening Post baptized Solvang as a tourist town. The illustrated story contained pictures of "Danish provincial" and dancing, smilling, and cheerful people dressed up in folk costumes. Thus, at the same time as many of the original institutions of Solvang abandoned their Danish roots or vanished,

"all that is Danish" became marketed to tourists and that principle became vital to the town. The development of the town's Danish appearance was started much by chance through the efforts of individuals. From the 1950s and 60s, however, the expansion of "all-Danish" was based on economic considerations and was supported by political decisions in the community. New buildings and activities were added to the town's repertoire. However, these houses, festivals, museums, rooms for wine tasting, and golf courses were not all established by people who had any personal affiliation with Denmark but by white people of European descent in general.

On its exterior, Solvang has probably never been as Danish marked as it is at the present. Everywhere references to "Danish" are included – in aesthetics, taste, and signs. The village's Danishness materializes itself on buildings, T-shirts, restaurant menus, street- and store-names, and in many other places. The history of one of the very earliest houses in Solvang can illustrate how the steadily growing demand for more Danish signifiers pattern the town's landscape:

This house was built in 1911. Until 1914, it housed the Danish folk-high-school and the Lutheran Congregation. Regardless of its outer appearance, the building was then essential to the community's Danish practices and everyday life. In 1931, the house was remodeled as a restaurant and rooming house. Still not especially Danish looking it at least had a Danish name after its owner: Knudsen's Coffee Shop

Some years later the look of the building was significantly changed. A picture from the mid-1960s and another from the spring of 1998 illuminates how the house has been completely redressed since it was built in 1911 to meet a steadily growing demand for something authentic, Danish. Similar processes of progressive authentication have reshaped many other buildings in Solvang's business district.

The Norwegian anthropologist Marianne Gullestad⁵ has distinguished the study of the national into two fields. The first, National cultural processes, are processes through which something is invented, institutionalized, and sacralized as something National. The second, cultural processes within a nation are homogenizing processes within the political territory of a nation state. Both these processes have been at work in the elaboration of Solvang. Cultural processes that are marked more by the American context than by anything Danish form the town's landscape and social life. While Solvang in this sense is American, the town is also a display of the community's skillful use of "all-Danish" as the platform for the local tourist industry. From how this platform is presented in marketing materials and from how it is materialized in the town's shops it is obvious, that the business people are aware of which elements can be marketed as Danish with success. The things they choose are all part of Danish national cultural processes. Consequently, Solvang contains signifiers similar to those marketed by tourist organizations from Denmark in their attempt to make the country attractive to visitors. In Solvang there are many references to Hans Christian Andersen and The Little Mermaid, The Round Tower of Copenhagen and Vikings. The town's houses festivals, and menus display, supposedly Danish half-timbering and mills, folk-traditions, food and taste. Even if the image of Solvang can not totally match the original, it is clear that the elements and structures of "Danishness" in the images are similar if not identical.

The Swedish-American folklorist Barbro Klein⁶ describes in a study what happens with Swedish traditions in an American context. In Solvang, similar processes shape the transformation of cultural elements following Danes across the Atlantic. Elements surviving the transfer are often connected to an agrarian-religious cycle of the year and they represent traditions of people who were not poor. Among the different kinds of tradition, sound, dance, material objects, and food continue to be in use while verbal traditions have vanished – not least, because they exclude all non-competent people from participation. This exclusion of verbal tradition is a functional precondition at big events – like Danish Days in Solvang – where a lot of individuals are offered access or demand access to a group, which they usually do not belong to.

In Solvang's landscape, constructed along these lines of development, one can easily identify two groups of people. The first group is the local vendors. If interviewed about the town and its history they most often respond with a more or less developed version

of the above repeated story. In 1990, only around 20 percent of the population of the town had Danish roots. This fraction, however, seem completely to dominate the public image of the town. Many locals of non-Danish descent affiliate themselves with this minority of Danish origin. In interviews, they explain how their biography has merged with the town in very harmonious ways. They stress community, family values, and safety in their everyday life as common ground with the Danes and ascribing these community qualities to the national background of the pioneers. So, even if the local Danes form a minority, many other people of European descent associate themselves with this minority forming, as it seems, a coherent Danish imagery. This composed Danish imagined community today encompasses not only vendors, but also commuters living in Solvang and working mostly in Santa Barbara, as well as a fairly large group of retirees.

The second group, which is easily identifiable, consists of the visitors. During the day, they comprise the bulk of people one meets in the "downtown" - touristic - section of the village. The overwhelming majority of visitors are white, middle class Californians from the cities: LA, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Barbara, Santa Maria... The influx of foreigners, besides an occasional busload of Japanese tourists, is small and only rarely one meets African-Americans in this group. People talking Spanish are, as will be discussed further below, not represented in this group to the extent one might imagine from the ethnic composition of Solvang and of its surroundings. Thus, in general the individual visitor can easily melt into the picture of Danish Solvang and subscribe to its "general Scandinavian" or "European" feeling, as they answer when asked about why they go here.

There is at this point little reason to doubt, that one of the major reasons why so many people today visit Solvang is exactly the ability of its landscape to incorporate every(white)one into its imagery of a village of the Old, European, World. Thus, the very attraction of Solvang might very well be depicted as its way of conveying to the visitor an uncomplicated image of a Danish/European Gemeinschaft, which everyone can join — for a day or a lifetime.

However, if one observes more carefully the everyday life of Solvang or moves beyond the downtown area, one can identify an additional group present in the village. This third group consists of what locals call "Mexicans" – a group of people with very different biographies and legal statuses. The label "Mexican" has many facets. The label lumps together characteristics as: Spanish speaking, illegal immigrant, Roman Catholic, poor sense for the quality of work, uneducated, poverty, criminality... Being Mexican, thus, is being the opposite of what local whites/Danes want and try to associate themselves with, and being Mexican is a direct contradiction of what the town's merchants try to sell to their visitors.

The town's tourist industry is heavily dependent upon the Mexicans. Even if they are a group of newcomers, who have appeared in the village during the last two decades, they form today the majority of employees on the village's backstage. Restaurant cooks and dishwashers, motel cleaners and gardeners, and bakers are today most often Mexicans.

Today, when half the children starting in the local school speak Spanish at home. Solvang's imagery of an Old World Gemeinschaft is cracking. This is observed by white locals, who complain that a present drop in tourist inflow - whether real or imagined - is due to the hiring of Mexicans. Many locals explain that the village looses its unique charm, when the visitors are no longer served in the shops and restaurants by tall, blond Scandinavians. As a reminder from a modern complex Gesellschaft, the Mexicans destroy the locals' cherished Danish landscape. Even if local whites themselves employ the Mexicans, due to the lower cost, they abhor the simultaneous lose of the town's imagined Gemeinschaft. To the white/Danes, Mexicans are not supposed to be there and if they have to be around, they ought to stay invisible. The Mexicans are, thus, mostly still kept backstage, even if they have in the last few years also started to appear as waiters and shop clerks. In addition, they have no opportunity to present themselves as part of the village's history whether in written accounts or through representation in the landscape. Solvang indeed has an early-early Chumash, or Native-American, history, as well as an early Spanish and Mexican history. The history of the Chumash is banished from Solvang and conveniently located in a reservation – with a casino – some miles away. Solvang shares its hilltop with the 19th

of the twenty-one missions that formed the backbone of the Spanish/Mexican administration of Alta California from the late 1700s. The Old Mission Santa Inez, which was build in 1804, is today a historical landmark, situated right off downtown Solvang. However, in the local narrative, the history of the hilltop's Spanish and Mexican history often starts and ends with the founding of the Mission in 1804, if not with a futile Indian uprising there in 1824. In narrative, the modern history of the hilltop starts first with the arrival of the Danes in 1911. Thus, local Mexicans are not only relatively invisible in the landscape; they are also excluded from establishing themselves with representations in this landscape. A signifier for the Mexicans would by the white/Danish dwellers and merchants of the town be perceived as an inappropriate adoption of an unwelcome sign of Gesellschaft, and such a representation, they imagine, would harm the tourist industry

Local white/Danes as well as the vast majority of visitors – both groups consisting mostly of people of mixed European origins – find in Solvang's landscape elements that allow them to obtain identity. They acquire identity from feeling included or excluded from the imagined Old World, European Gemeinschaft of Solvang in its American context. Thus, from this perspective Solvang has very little to do with Danishness as such and very much to do with establishing and confirming white, middle class, English speaking, American normality. However, this normality excludes Spanish speaking. poorer, Catholic, so-called Mexicans, who by the whites are identified with negative effects of Modernity, such as multiculturalism, and who are therefor disturbing the clean and safe imagined Gemeinschaft of Solvang. Actively excluded as an element of an undesired Gesellschaft the Mexicans tend to be invisible in downtown Solvang. While older Mexicans, who are born elsewhere, have biographies anchored outside the community, a new generation of individuals is growing up in today's Solvang. These young Mexicans, born and raised in the town, are in a difficult situation. On the one hand they live in the town and must try to make sense of its landscape; on the other hand this landscape makes them invisible and offers them no chance of being represented. How the young Mexicans handle their marginal situation is part of my ongoing research. However, an indication of the their stance might come from a local, who talked of the youth as "a very angry young bunch".

In conclusion I might emphasize, that I am looking at Solvang's landscape and these three groups from a perspective offering privilege to a specific kind of identity, which might be termed ethnic or national. This, however, does not mean that I find that ethnic or national identity is more important or basic than other aspects of individuals or groups identity build upon other characteristics as for instance: class, gender, age, or generation. In an analysis of Solvang's landscape, as the most important signifier for the town's particularity as Danish, I, however, regard the ethnic/national approach as the most rewarding.

If we want more in detail to illuminate relations between identity formation and landscape, it is my point here that we have to study closely how landscapes — as for instance Solvang's — are both historically organized by social relations and themselves are the material frameworks within which social relations are performed as inclusion and exclusion... short: as executions of powers. If we recognize, that processes of identity formation are dependent on the ability of groups to distinguish themselves as different from others at the same time as they are recognized by these others as a distinct group an understanding of "landscape" also as a social process could turn out to be very fruitful.

Thank you - or as they say in Solvang: "Mange tak".

Notes:

¹This text was presented first as a paper at the Society of Architectural Historians Annual Meeting in Los Angeles, April 15-19, 1998. It was presented in the session: "Architecture as Sign in Ethnic American Communities", which was organized and chaired by Lynne Horiuchi, University of California, Santa Barbara. Where nothing else is mentioned all photos are taken by the author during fieldwork in Solvang in 1992, 1996, and 1998.

2I should note here that throughout this paper I am employing the sociological concepts Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft to discuss my topic. Gemeinschaft denotes a simple, small-scale, traditional, and stable community, whereas Gesellschaft implies the everchanging context for everyday life in complex, modern societies. I use these concepts not to describe the true conditions of everyday life, but in order to illuminate ideal and imagined pictures of how life could or ought to be.

I am referring here to discussions by the Finnish-Swedish sociologist Johan Asplund in Essä om Gemeinschaft och Gesellschaft (Gothenburg: Korpen, 1991).

³ Solvang, California. Danish Capital of America. Destination Guide 1997, p. 17.
⁴On the history of the town, see: Tore Kristiansen, Jake Harwood & Howard Giles: Ethnolinguistic Vitality in 'The Danish Capital of America'. Journal of Multillingual and Multicultural Development vol. 12, No. 6, pp. 412-448, 1991. And for a local voice: Elaine Revelle: Solvano. Denmark in the USA (Fourth edition). Solvano: The Book Loft. 1991.

 Marianne Gullestad: Small Facts and Large Issues: The Anthropology of Contemporary Scandinavian Society. Annual Review of Anthropology, vol 18, pp. 71-93, 1989.
 Barbro Klein: Den gamla hembygden eller vad har hänt med de svenska folktraditionerna i USA? Åke Daun & Billy Ehn (eds.): Blandsverige. Om kulturskillnader

och kulturmöten, pp. 43-67. Stockholm: Carlssons, 1988.

THANKS FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL BETTER BUILDINGS BY DESIGN CONFERENCE!



Over 1,100 architects, builders, engineers and others attended this year.

Thank you, AIA members, for your support!

www.efficiencyvermont.com 1-888-921-5990

