
president's column

*donna j. leban, aia, lc, iesna;
2004 president aiaVT*

aiaVT



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

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

The State of Vermont Department of State Buildings announced recently that as of June 2004, it will institute some changes to its Architect/Engineer contracting documents. The proposed changes are a welcome sign that State Buildings is willing to modify its standard practices to encourage high performance building design and construction. The proposed changes to the State Building contract language are available online at www.aiavt.org.

If Architects and Engineers under State Buildings' contracts follow (as required) the detailed process instructions outlined in the "High Performance Design Guide (Vermont and Northeast Region)" by Kelly Karmel, AIA as well as specific recommendations offered in the "Advanced Building (E-Benchmark) Guidelines 2003" by the New Buildings Institute; and VT State Buildings and Efficiency Vermont are willing to provide reasonable financial incentives to allow designers to achieve these standards, everyone stands to gain. The above guidelines are all available through Efficiency Vermont www.encyciencyvermont.com.

Architects should gain by:

- Becoming more involved in setting environmental goals with the client early on in the design process;
- Selecting and working with consultants during the Schematic Design phase to plan for an integrated design approach – something that is not currently common practice;
- Learning to set design priorities in keeping with environmental goals;
- Learning to be the team leader in maintaining environmental design priorities throughout the process; and
- Learning more about the process and importance of building commissioning.

cont.

excerpt from Sometimes a Great Notion Ken Kesey (1964; p. 1-2)

Along the western slopes of the Oregon Coastal Range...come look: the hysterical crashing of tributaries as they emerge into the Wakonda Auga River...The first little washes flashing like thick rushing winds through sheep sorrel and clover, ghost fern and nettle, sheering, cutting...forming branches. Then, through bearberry and salmonberry, blueberry and blackberry, the branches crashing into creeks, into streams. Finally, in the foothills, through tamarack and sugar pine, shittim bark and silver spruce- and the green and blue mosaic of Douglas fir- the actual river falls five

cont.

6.04:1

chicago! learn - celebrate - dream

Join fellow AIA members in Chicago, June 10-12, for the AIA National Convention and Expo!

Sign up now for the premier design and construction industry event, with top-rated programs and cutting-edge products. For convention information and online registration, visit www.aia.org.

aia to present rural studio film at yestermorrow

aiaVT will be collaborating with Yestermorrow to show the film 'The Rural Studio' on Wednesday August 4th, at Yestermorrow (we'll keep you posted as to the time). Check out the film info at www.ruralstudiofilm.com. Contact Lauren Davis at lad@gvvarchitects.com for more information.

FLYNNDOG

art by architects

aiaVT invites all architects to submit artwork for an upcoming show of Art by Architects.

This exhibition is scheduled for September and October 2004, to coincide with Burlington's 11th annual ArtHop at FLYNNDOG, 208 Flynn Ave Burlington, VT. From here we will hopefully relocate the exhibit to Middlebury to complement the AIA New England Conference in November.

Submissions are due by June 23, 2004. For more information and submission guidelines, visit the aiaVT website at www.aiavt.org or contact Lauren Davis at lad@gvvarchitects.com or Bren Alvarez at bren@sasarchitects.com. For information on the venue, visit the FLYNNDOG website at www.flynndog.com.

In reading though some of the changes to State Buildings document language, I found several points that demand clarification and/or further discussion:

1. The State Buildings contract documents clearly describe the architect as "in charge" of the design process and contract. The most notable focus of the LEED design and certification process, however, is the importance of an integrated team approach between the owner/architect/engineers/environmental design consultants. There is nothing in the State contract language that emphasizes the critical nature of the design team collaboration to achieve the desired goals. There does also not appear to be a recognition that most architects and engineering firms require special consultants to obtain the necessary expertise to design a building that could meet a LEED standard. This requires both additional design time and financial resources from the client.

Note: There is an excellent article in the May issue of Environmental Building News: "Greening Your Firm: Building Sustainable Design Capabilities." It accurately points out that designing green is not an easy shift for most architects and engineers who are not accustomed to working collaboratively through every phase of design. It does require a cultural change as well as a process change to be successful.

2. Emphasis in the contract documents is placed on requirements for meeting and coordinating efforts with Efficiency Vermont. This is in all cases advisable, yet Efficiency Vermont clearly does not provide professional engineering and design services. While they may provide valuable ideas and financial incentives that can be pursued by the engineers/architects, local expertise in the areas of daylighting and lighting design, envelope design, environmental building material selection, high-efficiency HVAC and control systems and site/landscaping design must not be supplanted by a State-funded agency without professional liability or engineering/architectural licensing credentials.

cont.

hundred feet...and look: opens out upon the fields. Metallic at first, seen from the highway through the trees, like an aluminum rainbow, like a slice of alloy moon. Closer, becoming organic, a vast smile of water with broken and rotting pilings jagged along both gums, foam clinging to the lips. Closer still, it flattens into a river, flat as a street, cement-gray with a texture of rain. Flat as a rain-textured street even during flood season because of a channel so deep and a bed so smooth: no shallows to set up buckwater rapids, no rocks to rile the surface...nothing to indicated movement except the swirling clots of yellow foam skimming

cont.

6.04:2

aiaVT welcomes

frank barrett, *aia, white river junction*
sebastian pugliese, *aia, charlotte*
stephen rooney, *aia, burlington*

aiaVT welcomes back!

david sellars, *aia, warren*

AIA Opens Job Board to Summer Opportunities

Now through July 31, AIA member firms, at no cost, can place openings for summer student internships on the AIA Career Center job board, www.aia.jobcontrolcenter.com/post.cfm.

Openings will remain on the site, unless deleted by employer, for 45 days. All postings will close on July 31. To qualify, openings must be limited-term, paid positions.

To post an opening, AIA members should register their firm, if it is not already registered, then follow the links to Post a Job. To receive free placement, use the Job Posting Duration drop-down menu on the job posting form to choose Student Internship: Free 45-day. These openings can be easily recognized by selecting the Job Type as Summer Internship.

Students can also post their résumés for consideration for summer positions. All advertisers on the site, including those posting summer openings, can access these résumés.

For more information contact Brenda J. Henderson, Hon. AIA, Managing Director, AIA Component Relations at bhenderson@aia.org.

3. Modeling of building systems is a critical component in achieving a high performance building. Who is providing or paying for this service? Efficiency Vermont has in the past provided or paid for modeling, but now says that this is not a cost effective use of their resources. Is BGS going to provide funding for systems modeling?

4. Existing practice by many architecture and engineering firms pressured to reduce design fees relies heavily on lighting and HVAC systems manufacturers for selection and sizing of equipment. These manufacturers are in competition with each other for the lowest overall initial cost and (at least in the lighting industry) readily admit that they do not consider local or State energy codes when providing equipment schedules and design layouts. Manufacturers interested in providing a quick service to contractors and engineers may use outdated guidelines rather than actual project requirements and consistently overdesign systems. This practice must be clearly discouraged, and State Buildings must be willing to pay for proper design and coordination. Balancing the additional design cost will be the savings from competitive bidding with three qualifying products specified, reduction in equipment costs from avoiding overdesign, as well as the energy savings over time.

5. As discussed by the aiaVT Board of Directors at our May meeting, State Buildings is placing responsibility on the architect to perform or contract for commissioning. While there are various ways to provide commissioning services, the owner's interest is to determine if the building is performing properly. If it is not, it is up to the commissioning agent (CA) to determine what is wrong and help the owner resolve the problem. The lines of responsibility may be blurred a bit when the CA is paid by the architect.

cont.

seaward with the wind, and the thrusting groves of flooded bam, bent taut and trembling by the pull of silent, dark momentum. A river smooth and seeming calm, hiding the cruel file-edge of its current beneath a smooth and calm-seeming surface. The highway follows its northern bank, the ridges follow its southern. No bridges span its first ten miles. And yet, across, on that southern shore, an ancient two-story wood-frame house rests on a structure of tangled steel, of wood and earth and sacks of sand, like a two-story bird with split-shake feathers, sitting fierce in its tangled nest. Look... Rain drifts about the windows. Rain filters through a haze of yellow smoke issuing from a mossy-stoned

cont.

6.04:3

architecture website awards

The Architecture Web Site Awards is a program that recognizes the best architecture-related websites for architecture firms and students of architecture.

Gold Medal, Honor Award and Merit Award accolades are given, and the winners are permitted to use the awards program winner's logo(s) on their websites and in their promotional materials.

The awards program entry fee is \$25.00 (US) per entry in the Professional Category, \$12.00 (US) per entry in the Student Category. Deadline for entries is August 6, 2004.

Complete information regarding the awards program can be found at www.entablature.com/awards.htm

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Efficiency Vermont is your statewide energy efficiency utility. It was created by the Vermont Legislature and the Vermont Public Service Board to help all Vermonters reduce energy costs and protect our environment, and is operated by an independent, non-profit organization.

Look for a future aiaVT program on Building Commissioning early next year. This topic will, no doubt, provide for some very interesting discussion.

The US General Services Administration conducted its own study of the value of integrated environmental design, and found that additional design costs required to properly design and coordinate bid documents for complex building projects yielded significantly fewer change orders during construction, and overall lower operating costs. (This study did not take into account ongoing research on the reductions in worker sick time in facilities designed with high quality lighting systems- another reason to move away from "business as usual.")



chimney into slanting sky. The sky runs gray, the smoke wet-yellow. Behind the house, up in the shaggy hem of mountainside, these colors mix in windy distance, making the hillside itself run a muddy green. On the naked bank between the yard and humming river's edge, a pack of hounds pads back and forth, whimpering with cold and brute frustration, whimpering and barking at an object that dangles out of their reach, over the water, twisting and untwisting, swaying stiffly at the end of a line tied to the tip of a large fir pole...jutting out of a top-story window. Twisting and stopping and slowly untwisting in the gusting rain, eight or ten feet above the flood's current, a human arm, tied at the wrist, (just

cont.

6.04:4



firm profile- *Birdseye Building Co.*

Birdseye Building Co. has been designing and building custom homes since 1984. Our architecture and design studios, metal and glass studio and woodshop are located in a restored barn in Richmond. Architects Brian Mac, Mark Bromley and Terry Findeisen have helped create a progressive and creative environment that caters to the specific needs and desires of our clientele.

Birdseye's foundation is built on its flexibility. We embrace change as opportunity. This is reflected in all aspects of the company from design to construction. Each new project begins with the understanding that it is different from those previous. Our approach is adjusted to accommodate each new challenge.

We are currently involved in the transformation of an old farmhouse into a high-performance building envelope that will have the capability of running solely from the natural resources found on the property. We are exploring the most current, available technologies, including geothermal heat, photovoltaic cells, and wind turbines in order to utilize the property's sustainable resources while creating a beautiful and inspirational living environment.

Complementing these green technologies is the integration of locally and sustainably harvested woods such as cherry, beech, and maple into the project. The Birdseye woodshop and design department are making use of native wood species and FSC certified woods in the furniture, cabinetry, and architectural elements wherever possible, as we are trying to maintain the highest standards of



private residence, shelburne

cont.

the arm; look) disappearing downward at the frayed shoulder where an invisible dancer performs twisting pirouettes for an enthralled audience (just the arm, turning there, above the water)...for the dogs on the bank, for the blinking rain, for the smoke, the house, the trees, and the crowd calling angrily from across the river, "Stammmp! Hey, goddam you anyhow, Hank Stammmp!"

And for any one else who might care to look.

6.04:5

gordon gazebo, lincoln



birdseye home, bates barn, richmond



“green living” throughout the entire house. The opportunities offered by these constraints are the driving force behind this project. We are excited by the challenge.

We have a rich history of working with other designers, architects and builders, so please contact us with any project questions or comments. Visit the Birdseye website for more information and images of other Birdseye Building projects: www.birdseyebuilding.com.



michael arad in hanover:
boy wonder tells all

donald maurice kreis



As anyone who has ever attended a lecture given by a celebrity architect can tell you, the logistics of these things are always maddening. The room is always too small, the projection system never works right and the lecturer generally degenerates into a state of obvious befuddlement or annoyance. A metaphor comes to mind: Lecture is to audience as contemporary American architecture is to America.

So it was when America's newest celebrity architect, Michael Arad, came to Dartmouth on April 30 to explain to his alma mater how a hitherto unknown government major from the Class of '94 won the competition to design the memorial at the site of the World Trade Center. Fortunately, the lecture took place at Dartmouth's Rockefeller Center – and any building bearing that particular name always has a lot of rooms in it. The entire audience, a throng of ungainly proportions in part because it was parents' weekend, had to move not once but twice until a room of sufficient size with a working device for projecting digital images could be secured.

Arad, a coltish youth of 34 wearing the customary black shirt and Liebeskind-esque eyeglasses, seemed befuddled rather than annoyed. It was an amiable sort of befuddlement, and it seemed fitting for a guy who was on parental leave from a job in an obscure government agency – New York City's Housing Authority – when his fateful inspiration struck. Here's a designer who hasn't yet hauled his slide carousel (or its digital equivalent) to every stop on the Ivy League and graduate architecture school tour. Thus Arad didn't put on a show – he told a story.

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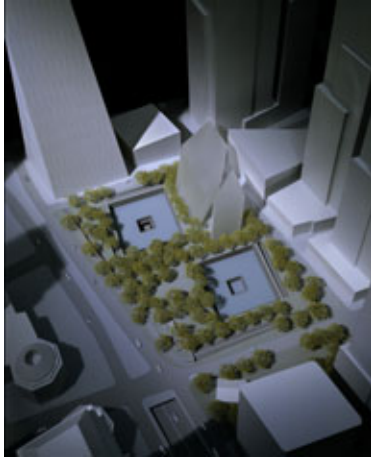
excerpt from *The Production of Houses*/ Christopher Alexander
(1985; p. 140-143)

Step Six: Subdivision of Lots

The fact that each family now had their chosen corner did not, of itself, completely fix the lot boundaries which marked each of their lots. Next, we had to draw actual lot lines, corresponding to the locations of the individual families and the overall configuration of the cluster. In order to establish these lot boundaries, it was necessary to make a very large

cont.

6.04:7



The designer of this memorial faces a challenge that was not imposed on the creator of the Vietnam War memorial in Washington. There, Maya Lin could be as abstract as she desired because her project was to be built far from the actual battlegrounds of the war. This memorial is more like the Gettysburg Battlefield – the world may little note nor long remember what we build there, but it can never forget what they did there.

Hence “Reflecting Absence” – a concept, Arad’s lecture confirmed, that intentionally evokes both the victims and the cataclysm that killed them. The image that first came to Arad was one of two voids, in the shape of the twin towers’ footprint, not at the site itself but in the Hudson River nearby. Arad thought the notion of water flowing into two spaces that would never fill up and would always remain empty was a compelling way to express “inconsolable loss.”

The practical problem, he conceded, was that “water doesn’t behave that way.” But, thanks to paternity leave (and, presumably, infant naps), he had time to tinker with the idea at the model shop of some friends, and he eventually came up with the basic concept that became the winning “Reflecting Absence” entry.

How did fate summon Arad from obscurity? “I didn’t really get called,” he reminisced. “There was an email. It sat there for a few days.”

When he finally got back to the representative of the jury, he learned that he had advanced to the next stage of the competition and had two weeks to put together a full presentation for the jurors. Eventually he became one of three competitors for the Commission and was asked to deal with a particular critique: that his design created a plaza that was “bleak” and “not conducive to other uses.”

“I was very sensitive to this particular criticism,” Arad said, because one of his objectives had been to create a memorial that would be “incorporated into the

cont.

number of experiments by moving stakes from one position to another, adjusting areas, until the common land had its appropriate shape and the individual lots had their appropriate areas. This process took two days. We placed stakes to correspond to the major corners of the common land, placed stakes to mark the corners of the individual lots, looked at them, moved the stakes, looked again, and so on, until we finally had a complete layout that reflected the previous decisions accurately and also felt right. It is helpful to remember how fundamentally different this process is from the normal process by which lots are subdivided and laid out. The individual lots are not fixed in advance, but are defined by the

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6.04:8



fabric of the city.” The solution was to make the plaza look more like northern New England, by importing a small forest of Eastern White Pine with the trees arrayed as if they were “beads sliding on an abacus.”

All of this merits comparison to events in Montreal some 40 years ago, when another young designer of Israeli birth and American training burst his way to prominence. But the celebrated creation of the beehive-like Habitat project for Expo '67 created great expectations for its architect, Moshe Safdie, that he could never quite replicate, at least as a young man. Safdie is therefore scorned by many in the starchitecture firmament – but today he runs a firm of 65 people and has lots more big commissions than, say, Peter Eisenman does.

Will Arad be more like Safdie or more like Eisenman? Well, when Eisenman took the podium at Dartmouth a couple of years ago, he began by demanding that everyone put down pens and turn off tape recorders. When Arad began his lecture, a baby began to howl – and Arad confessed with a grin that the commentator was his infant son Nathaniel. Who would you rather hire to design your house, or your arts center?

In addition to telling the story of “Reflecting Absence,” Arad made a point of crediting two of his Dartmouth teachers — architect Jack Wilson and artist Gerald Auten – as major influences. Wilson is a key figure in the school’s facilities planning office; Auten runs Dartmouth’s gallery and artist-in-residence programs. They saved Arad from law school, which he spurned in favor of Georgia Tech’s graduate architecture program. The rest, as they say, is history – and also quite a tribute to the value of a liberal arts education.

-30-

Unlike Arad, law school did manage to lure Donald Maurice Kreis. To see if he made the right choice, check out his architectural writings at www.dmkdmk.com.

families themselves, as part of a process of group interaction. In this respect, the cluster is completely different from a subdivision, where lots are defined impersonally, by a developer or by the city. In this unique process, the cluster as a whole first takes on a unique character, as a direct expression of the group’s wishes and needs; and second, each private lot is then placed in relation to this unique common land, so that each lot itself then takes on its own unique shape and character, according to its position. The specific geometry which reflects this unique and complex order is necessarily, then, unique and idiosyncratic. It is hard to lay out, hard to measure, and hard to survey.

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6.04:9

“constructions” exhibition celebrates the art of architecture

Spring arrived in central Vermont just in time for the opening of the Constructions exhibition at Studio Place Arts (SPA) in Barre, VT. The exhibit, which ran from April 20 – May 22, celebrated and contemplated the art of architecture while incorporating a wide range of work by professional and student architects, along with work by traditional artists working in various media. “Is architecture a fine art?” By all accounts of those who viewed the exhibition, the answer to that question was a resounding “yes!”

The genesis for the exhibition was a conversation in early 2003 between SPA director (and exhibition curator) Mark Tucker and Wendy Cox, professor of architecture at Norwich University’s Division of Art and Architecture. Wendy, a registered architect who maintains a professional practice in Waitsfield while teaching at Norwich and the Yestermorrow Design-Build School in Warren, was looking for an outlet to exhibit her student’s work. Support for educational programs in the arts is part of SPA’s charter, and this first conversation culminated in the Constructions exhibit.

In addition to a wide range of work from beginning to 5th-year students in Norwich’s graduate-level program, the exhibition included work from the professional firms of GB Architecture in Montpelier, Bread Loaf Corporation in Middlebury, and Truex Cullins & Partners in Burlington. Each of these firms’ displays included two- and three-dimensional examples that helped to illustrate the complexity of the process that is at the heart of the practice of architectural design. On a different scale, Terry Findeisen of Burlington exhibited a wood and stone stool titled “Sisyphus Task” along with the concept drawing she prepared before

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Indeed, it is worth describing the process of surveying the lots. After we had staked out the lots, the city surveyors came from the Department of Public Lands to survey and record them. The first time they came back with their survey, it was hopelessly off- with lot shapes on their drawing that were entirely different from the lots actually staked out on the land. This happened because the surveying techniques they used were so much adapted to the normal layout of subdivisions (straight lines, perfect right angles, etc.) that their procedure was simply too inaccurate to record the complexity of the actual stake marks properly. The surveyors had to come back three times, finally with their supervi-

cont.



breadloaf



student work



gossens bachman



student work



john brickels

building the stool. Finally, two abstract pieces by John Anderson of John Anderson Studios in Burlington went to the other extreme and demonstrated how the stresses of the environment weigh on our notion of structure.

Perhaps the most unusual piece in the exhibit was John Brickels' 6-foot clay rendition of a city skyscraper, which, while standing erect, is showing the strains and stresses of near collapse, with sections of the building seemingly twisted and distorted. Brickels is known in the Vermont art scene for his elaborately detailed yet slightly off-kilter "reconstructions" of the barns that scatter the Vermont landscape, buildings that, while retaining their functionality, have long ago lost the plumb lines that their original builders gave to them. Age has weathered their color and shape yet their beauty remains.

In conjunction with the exhibit, SPA hosted a symposium on May 7th titled "Architecture – a Fine Art?" The symposium presented the opinions and perspectives of a distinguished panel of regional architects, including John Anderson, Wendy Cox, Greg Gossens, Founding Partner of GB Architecture, and Danny Sagan and Alisa Dworsky from Terra Firma, Inc. Mark Tucker, SPA Board Member and curator for the Constructions exhibition, moderated the panel discussion.

Studio Place Arts (SPA) is a community center for the visual arts that has operated in downtown Barre for more than four years and serves thousands of resident community members and visitors. Over time, SPA has become a rich community resource for art making, learning, and exhibition. SPA's home is the oldest freestanding brick building on Barre's historic main street. SPA is committed to reaching out to bring all members of the community into its facility to become creators of art through involvement in classes, workshops, lectures, studio experiences, and to view art exhibited in active galleries on all three floors. For additional information on SPA and its ongoing activities visit their website at www.studioplacearts.com.

ing engineer, before they could make a plat which accurately recorded the lot lines as they really were. In the usual procedure, reality is governed by paper. In our process, the paper merely records the much more vivid reality that is worked out on site by the families themselves- and the resulting complexity of the common land and private lots reflects much more accurately the real complexity of needs and hopes and dreams that all the families and individuals have.

6.04:11

“first thursdays” in brattleboro

I am taking the opportunity to bring to your attention an item of interest from your design brothers and sisters at the southern end of this fair State. Lacking any forum for meeting other design professionals in southern Vermont, a number of us have taken the initiative to create one called “First Thursdays.” It is an informal gathering of mainly architects who meet in Brattleboro and its environs on the first Thursday of every month to discuss the many facets of architecture. We have done so since the beginning of the year and have already had presentations on architecture from here and abroad, specifically Poland and India.

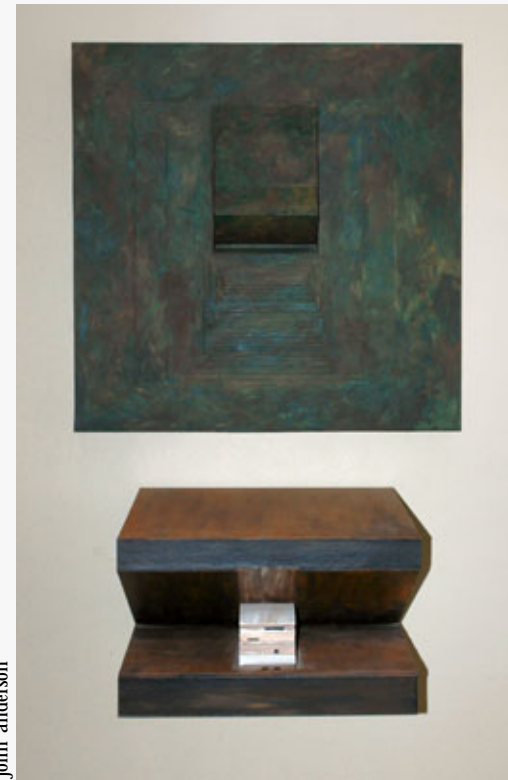
For more information, contact Joseph Cincotta, AIA, NCARB, MArch, DAD of LineSync Architecture at jc@LineSync.com.

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Please send articles, notices, letters, and graphic submissions to:

Andrea Murray, AIA
Bread Loaf Corporation
Architects, Planners and Builders
1293 Route 7 South
Middlebury, Vermont 05753
802-388-9871 ext. 239
amurray@breadloaf.com

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john anderson